VARIA 2

The Beginnings of the Salesian Presence in East Asia

Nestor C. Impelido (ed.)

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The Salesians first went to Macao in 1906, without realizing perhaps that it would be for them a jumping board to go to the rest of East Asia: China (1910), Japan (1926), Hong Kong, Thailand and East Timor (1927), Laos and Vietnam (1941), Philippines (1951), Taiwan (1952) and Korea (1955). Later, they would move on to Indonesia (1985), Cambodia (1994) and Mongolia (2001).

These two volumes are actual accounts of what have transpired in the history of the Salesians after a century has passed since the first "Opera Salesiana" was established in China, where the uneasy and unstable events revealed to be "providential" inasmuch as these provoked the expansion of the Salesians to the rest of East Asia. These histories were not written only by nor about the Salesians of Don Bosco, but also by and about the other members of the Salesian Family, some of whom were Asian born — Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, Sisters of Charity of Miyazaki, Sisters of the Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Daughters of the Queenship of Mary, Don Bosco Volunteers. They reflect the "mission politics" of the Salesian Society in the first half of the 20th century when the Church (with Benedict XV, Pius XI) was trying to upgrade and renew its missionary vocation.

Salesian East Asia, where Don Bosco's charisma is seemingly destined to be more intense and alive, is a region which has decided to go back early to its roots, in order to strengthen its present and reinforce its future. Consequently, it has written the beginnings of its presence. The East Asian Salesians, who do not wish to be indifferent to their history, had made history and still hope to continue to make history.

Fr. Nestor C. Impelido SDB, a member of ACSSA, works for the Salesian Historical Institute in Rome, Italy. At the same time, he teaches Church History and Philippine Church History at the Don Bosco Center of Studies in Manila, Philippines.

ASSOCIAZIONE CULTORI STORIA SALESIANA
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PRESENTATION OF THE COLLECTION

At the threshold of the "Fourth International Congress of the History of the Salesian Work", which will be celebrated in Mexico City in February 2006, the Presidency of ACSSA (Associazione Cultori di Storia Salesiana) presents to the members of the Association, as one more exponent of the work realized in its five year term which is about to end — the creation of a new historical collection, entitled VARIA ACSSA.

Its creation answers, the finality of ACSSA: "to promote studies on Salesian History, favouring the research, the actualisation and the collaboration among its members"; to the necessity of offering a scientific course of spreading, through written publication, the results of the researches which the members of the association realize in their respective countries; to grant the opportunity for these works to be known by colleagues and whoever may be interested in them: Salesians, Daughters of Mary Help of Christians and the Salesian Family in its whole.

The collection is self-explanatory for its title, VARIA ACSSA, which signifies the amplitude and the diversity of the themes: sources, studies, notes, bibliographies, etc. At the same time it is also explained by its collaborators; it is reserved exclusively to the members of the ACSSA, in line with the ACSSA's statute, which differentiates it from analogous collections (as that of the Salesian Historical Institute).

The Presidency is responsible for the concrete aspects of the collection VARIA ACSSA, as well as on the possibility of how determined works can be published also in other ways, given the non-commercial character of the collection. Moreover, the contributions are subject to

the editorial norms of ACSSA's secretariat, which, however, respects the liberty of methodology of each country and its language.

The Presidency is very satisfied of having achieved this goal of creating this collection. It trusts that it may also be the realization of a desire, more or less expressed, by all the members of the ACSSA.

"To know history is to know life", an old proverbs affirms. To spread the history of the two Salesian Congregations and of the groups of the Salesian Family is to make known the vitality, already secular, of its charisma, and the immense apostolic work realized, in all the continents, by those who preceded us. This is the task of ACSSA; it is also the finality of the new collection.

Maria Fé Nuñez FMA
President ACSSA

Rome, 4 November 2005

ASSOCIAZIONE CULTORI STORIA SALESIANA
VARIA–2

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE SALESIAN PRESENCE IN EAST ASIA

(Acts of the Seminar on Salesian History,
Hong Kong, 4-6 December 2004)

Part One
The Salesians of Don Bosco

Nestor C. Impelido SDB (ed.)

HONG KONG

Proprietà riservata all'Associazione Cultori di Storia Salesiana
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INTRODUCTION

It is certainly a pleasure to write this page of introduction to the Acts of the ACSSA Seminar of Hong Kong (December 2004), on the presence of the Salesian Work in East Asia, immediately following the celebration of the first centenary of the arrival of the Salesians in India (Bombay, 5 January 1906) and preceding the analogous celebration of the coming of the Salesians in Hong Kong/ Macao (13 February 1906). A century of history has indeed passed, but not in vain, because its consequences are still alive amidst us, "children of that history", who now can go in search of the roots of the apostolic labour of our predecessors with instruments at our disposition.

With regards the first event, the Salesian India has already in its hands numerous local studies and two recent volumes on its first fifty years of history written by the specialist Joseph Thekkedath (*A History of the Salesians of Don Bosco in India from the beginning up to 1951-1952*, Bangalore 2005). With regards the second commemoration, the ACSSA seminar was intended to stimulate the study of the presence of the Salesians in the whole of East Asia, meaning not only China, but also Korea, the Philippines, Japan, Thailand, East Timor and Vietnam, even as the region awaits the publication of another expert, Carlo Socol, regarding the Salesian presence in China.

"Salesian Work" does not refer only to foundations by the Salesians of Don Bosco, but also to those started by the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians and by the numerous groups belonging to the Salesian Family, whether of local (Asian) or non-local (European) origin. In these two volumes containing the Acts of the Seminar of Hong Kong, we have about fifteen essays, of varying length and depth of analysis, whose value lies in their offering a first panorama of the origins and establishments of the Salesians in different Asian countries in a period of about fifty years: from the first presence in Macao (1906) to that in Korea (1954).

It is said, that books are the points of arrival of long researches; that they are the syntheses of previous intense studies and the conclusive results of many writers' and researchers' efforts. It can be said, however, that these two volumes of the ACSSA Hong Kong seminar are and simply intend to constitute the point of departure for a history that is still be written and to be told.

The apostolic exhortation *Ecclesia in Asia* of 6 November 1999, born from the Synod of the Bishops for Asia celebrated in Rome in April-May 1998, reminded us that Asia is the land of birth of Jesus and of the Church, and that together with the ecclesial community spread in the world, the Church in Asia will cross the threshold of the Christian third millennium, contemplating with marvel how much God has done from the beginning up to the present, and strong in the knowledge that just as in the first millennium the Cross was planted on European soil, in the second millennium on that of America and Africa, one could hope in the third millennium of gathering a great harvest of the faith in this continent so vast and alive: a continent inhabited by about two thirds of the earth's total population (India and China together constitute half of this), the great part of which are Muslim, Hindu or Buddhist, with a number of Catholics which does not even arrive at 100,000,000 million, including the 55 million of the Philippines.

To the spread of the gospel message in Asia, which began on the day itself of Christ's birth, the Salesian Society, which grew in Italy the 19th century, has contributed in the 20th century to the re-awakening of missionary activity, the re-organization of the Propaganda Fide, the greater attention to the establishment of local churches, the works of education and charity which accompanied the preaching of the Good News.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the first Salesian missionaries landed in China and educated generations of the young along the years. They committed themselves there and in the nearby countries to preach the Good News according to the charisma of Don Bosco. Their attempts to inculturate varied in success and failure. Their journey was often difficult not only because of the human deficiencies of individual missionaries, but also because they were sometimes unjustly considered foreigners to Asia and were identified with the colonial powers of the time.

Missionaries of great value (the likes of Fr. Carlo Braga, Fr. Gaetano Pasotti, Coadjutor Vincenzo Seneca, Fr. Antonio Cavoli, Fr. Erminio Rosetti, Fr. Archimede Martelli, Coadjutor Andrea Bragion, Sr. Elena Bottini, Sr. Letizia Begliatti, Sr. Maria Baldo) worked together with missionaries of modest capabilities to effect educative, religious and social works. They might not have reached the summit of fame of some of the missionaries in Latin America, but they attempted to adapt to the new

populations who learned from them ideas taught in Europe. True and authentic martyrs declared as such by the Church (Msgr. Luigi Versiglia and Fr. Callisto Caravario) or perhaps awaiting such recognition (the venerable Fr. Vincenzo Cimatti, the servant of God Fr. Carlo della Torre, Fr. Francisque Dupont) spent their daily existence together with humble priests, coadjutors and sisters in situations which threatened their freedom and in which often times they risked imprisonment for that same reason – that of the Gospel. They are responsible for the actual flowering of vocations of the Salesian Family in some countries of East Asia, as well as the re-launching of new works inside and outside of these nations.

The beginnings of such "undertaking", which now arrive at the 100 or 70 or 50 years of existence in the different countries of East Asia, are here recalled like flashes of light by professional scholars and by simple enthusiasts of history who give us a brief account of the first Salesian works in East Asia. These beginnings, guided by a Divine Providence capable of writing straight on the crooked lines of human freedom – the event of the Salesian presence in the Philippines is a classical example – can not and must not be forgotten. Otherwise, the Salesians risk to deprive themselves of their own roots, and in a certain way, of the significance of their lives and actions. In the light of their past, they can enlighten the paths of the their present and their future.

"The data exist", the anticipations succulent. What is now needed is to complete the documentation, interpret the documents correctly, deepen the less-known and problematic issues, and write out a version according to scientific criterion which is greatly shared in the actual ecclesiological-cultural time.

ACSSA has given a modest contribution with this seminar of Hong Kong which has been preceded by analogous seminars held in Europe and Latin America: it has opened and indicated the way to professional historians who have now the task to write monographs, whether national and local. Society in general, the Church and the Salesian Family feel the need and have the right to pretend for these works in the near future.

Francesco Motto

Rome, 31 January 2006

EDITOR'S NOTE

The aim of this current work is to present together the results of the seminar on Salesian History regarding the beginnings of the Salesian presence in East Asia – Oceania, held in Hong Kong from 4 to 6 December 2004. This particular seminar has been conducted in collaboration with the committee preparing the celebration of the centenary of the Salesian presence in China.

With this book, which is an initiative of ACSSA, the contributions of the seminar will be better diffused and shared with the SDBs, FMAs and other members of the Salesian Family in this particular region of the Salesian Society. It will also be a concrete cultural and historical contribution to the celebration of the 100 year anniversary of the coming of the Salesians in China, which can be considered as the "mother province" of the other Salesian presence in East Asia.

We have tried to respect the contributions of the authors of the articles contained in this book, whether in the language expression or content or method of research. Our effort was to coordinate the written reports presented in the seminar; to present them in a systematic and orderly manner; to arrange them in a manner that each contribution harmonizes with the whole work. Moreover, we have divided the work into two main parts. The first part deals with the lectures presented by the Salesians of Don Bosco on particular topics related to the world and regional historical contexts when the Salesians came to East Asia, and the actual establishment of the Salesian works in East Asia. The second part deals with the reports of the other members of the Salesian Family (FMA, CSM, SIHM, DQM, DBV), which present the origins of their respective institutes in the region.

Some of the contributions have been translated from their originals (Italian, Portuguese) into English (Anjos, Compri, Loparco, Miravalle, Motto, Mukai), which is the lingua franca of the region. Except for one contribution, we have included all the lectures and communications presented in the course of the seminar. We have also included the texts of the statements given by the Rector Major of the Salesians and the Vicar General of the FMA, as well as that of the President of ACSSA, as we consider them as important indicators of the direction to which the future work on Salesian history can go.

The seminar has created in the participants a greater consciousness of the need of preserving and conserving the historical patrimony of each

member of the Salesian Family at work in East Asia. It has also provoked an admission of having been indifferent and of having been remiss in wanting to preserve the sources for the future writing of the Salesian history, of being weak in the sense of history. But it has, nonetheless, challenged the participants to a resolution of greater awareness to study, write and teach one's local Salesian history.

We hope that the diffusion of these "brief histories" of the Salesian presence in East Asia will create further interest on the Salesian Family's rich and revealing historical wealth, specially on the part of those who have the responsibility of assuring that this is nourished and not lost.

SALESIAN MISSIONARY ACTIVITY WHILE BLESSED FILIPPO RINALDI (1921-1931) WAS RECTOR MAJOR WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO EASTERN ASIA

*Francesco Motto SDB**

Introduction

On 6 February 1922, Pius XI (†1939) ascended the Papal throne: he would become known as a "Pope of the Missions" (as was his predecessor, Benedict XV). Two months later, on 24 April, Fr. Filippo Rinaldi († 5 December 1931) was elected Rector Major: his ten years in office would be recalled for the great re-launching of the Salesian missionary movement. After a rapid glance at the "missionary policy" of the Papacy during the same period, we shall concentrate on that.

1. A change in the ecclesiological-missionary approach of the pontifical magisterium

With the promulgation of the apostolic letter *Maximum illud* (30 November 1919) Pope Benedict XV launched a new missionary era in the Church, setting out fundamental principles for evangelisation and practical courses of action.

Having praised past missionary activity, he indicated the current weaknesses: the nationalistic mentality of many missionaries, the colonialist style of some forms of evangelisation, the being too easily satisfied with the results achieved, the too restricted esprit de corps of missionary institutions. He indicated the aim of setting up new Churches for whose development the serious and in-depth formation of native clergy who one day would themselves assume pastoral responsibility for the people was necessary.

To the change in the theory there followed significant practical initiatives. Above all in *mission territories,* with the erection of 28 Vicariates Apostolic, eight Prefectures, the Apostolic Delegation for Japan-Korea-China-Formosa and various Apostolic Visitations (China, South

* Fr. Francesco Motto is professor of Salesian History and director of the Salesian Historical Institute in Rome, Italy.

Africa...). Then *in the mother-churches*: a) the transfer to Rome (dependent on Propaganda Fide) of the St. Peter's Work for Native Clergy; b) strong support for the "Missionary Union of the Clergy" – created to encourage interest on the part of the faithful in the Missions with a widespread development in individual parishes; c) finally the setting up of some missionary seminaries in Europe.[1]

The new Pope Pius XI continued the work of his predecessor. In the short space of four months: a) he gave precise instructions for the reorganisation of the methods of collecting and distributing offerings for the Missions; b) he re-launched the "Missionary Union of the Clergy" which celebrated its first Congress in Rome; c) he transferred to Rome the Work of the Propagation of the Faith founded in Lyons (France) a century earlier; d) he took the occasion of the Third Centenary of the founding of the Roman Congregation of Propaganda Fide to emphasise to the whole Church that she existed solely for the sake of all mankind, so that every baptised person had the duty to promote the Missions. The focus of attention was Asia, the continent in which the progress of the Catholic faith had made little significant headway, so that there needed to be a change of strategy, introducing a new approach: that of indigenisation. In practical terms, bearing in mind that in those days speaking about the Missions meant "China and Pope Pius XI": a) that year 1922, he sent as Apostolic Delegate Celso Costantini who was in favour of the "inculturation" ("adaptation" in those days) of the Church; b) two years later, he encouraged the first National Chinese Council presided over by Costantini himself; c) in October 1926, in St. Peter's, he consecrated the first six Chinese bishops (and three more in 1933); d) on 15 June 1926, in the face of ultra-nationalistic anti-western agitation in China, in an apostolic letter to those in charge of the local Church, he expressed the respect of the Catholic Church for their legitimate aspirations for the unity and independence of the country, the determination not to be a political tool of the western powers and the desire to safeguard the cultural traditions of the Chinese people; d) in the secret consistory held on 20 June 1927, he attributed the horrors of the war being waged in China, and also against the missionaries and their works, to the "seeds of civil war and social

[1] In Rome at the University of Propaganda Fide from 1920 courses in missiology had already been held for a decade before the setting up of the appropriate faculty at the Roman Gregorian University (1932) and the Urban College of Propaganda Fide was founded (1931) which had within it an academic Missionary Institute (1933).

revolution" imported from abroad; e) on the occasion of the reunification of the country under the Kuomintang of Nanking, on 1 August 1928, he did not fail to send to the Chinese people his greetings and to express his approval of their aspirations for independence, requesting for the missionaries and for the faithful no more than "freedom and the protection of the law". It was in effect a condemnation of the Protectorate, and at the same time of the well-known Unequal Treaties.[2]

The Holy See also took action on behalf of other missionary areas, especially Afro-Asian: a) Apostolic Visitors and Delegates were appointed in Indochina, South Africa (1923), in the Belgian Congo and the rest of Africa (1930); b) in October 1927, the Japanese Hamayaya was consecrated Bishop of Nagasaki; c) with liberality and some farsightedness, relations with Christians of other rites were regularised in Ethiopia, India, Egypt, taking into account respect for local traditions; d) a Japanese Synod was held in 1924 and another in South Africa in 1924-1927.

Of considerable importance also was the letter of the Prefect of Propaganda Fide on 20 May 1923 in which he exhorted the Superiors of Religious Orders and Congregations which were dedicated to the Missions: a) to a serious cultural and practical preparation of personnel, whether carried out in Europe or in the mission lands, to prepare eventual successors for the Vicars or Prefects Apostolic; b) to an adequate formation of native clergy and local male and female religious; c) to foster lay vocations for the teaching of arts and trades, the formation of catechists, teaching in primary schools.

A significant event during the first decade of the pontificate was the Vatican Missionary Exhibition for the 1925 Holy Year, which attracted very favourable public and critical notice on account of the attention given not only to strictly religious aspects but also to the scientific, which was understood as support being given to science by the Missions.

Two months after it closed, on 28 January 1926, Pius XI published his encyclical *Rerum Ecclesiae* in which, in line with *Maximum Illud*: a) he repeated the need to separate the work of evangelisation from any kind of political or temporal bargaining and to make determined efforts in the preparation of local clergy; b) he insisted that there should be the erection of new churches entrusted to local clergy who should not be in any way

[2] It was not insignificant that a few months before, there had been a sort of de-westernisation of the Indies with the elimination of the problematic heritage of the Portuguese "padroado".

inferior to the European clergy in their scientific, sacred and secular preparation, and this to be done through local seminaries; c) he expressed his hope that autonomous male and female religious communities would be founded, and that an equally local monasticism would be established to bring its irreplaceable contribution to the building up of a new church; d) he looked forward to a church blessed with many local catechists and an elite laity that would be decisive for the future of the Church and the country itself; e) he proposed the continuation of the "classical" works (hospitals, care of the sick, elementary schools...) besides the new ones: schools for agriculture, for arts and trades, high schools. Naturally the encyclical also dealt with the need for missionary collaboration through prayer, vocations and economic support.

In synthesis: from an historical point of view, it can be said that in the third decade of the 20th century, the Missions in the Far East came to the forefront in the pastoral concerns of the Church. Documents setting out future planning were produced, almost, one might say, at the request of missionaries from the West in China (Fr. Vincenzo Lebbe) and of the Chinese synod. The Holy See did not limit itself, as in the previous century, to indicating aims and ideals for missionary cooperation; it also gave a new theoretical and practical design with specific tasks for all sections of the Church.

As far as numbers are concerned, in these years there were about half a million baptisms a year, a considerable increase in missionary territories (some of them entrusted to local clergy), a significant increase in the income of the three Pontifical Organisations, all now coordinated in Rome with links at national level.

2. Location, form and timing of a Salesian missionary reawakening in the decade 1922-1931

To this widespread activity of government and animation at Church level, there corresponded on a notable scale that of the Salesian Society. The concerns and the directives of the Holy See gave a further impetus to the missionary awareness and activity already evident within the Salesian Society which in the decade in question celebrated two particularly spiritually significant events: the 50th anniversary of the Missions (1925) and the beatification of Don Bosco (1929). We shall briefly note some of the main practical initiatives of the time.

2.1. *Missionary expansion*

Between 1922 and 1931, the Salesian Society not only had a notable development in those countries where it was already present, but it also founded works in new European countries such as Czechoslovakia (1924), Holland (1928), Sweden (1930), and in countries outside Europe, such as Australia (1922), Canada (1924), Japan (1926), Hong Kong, Timor, Thailand (1927), Guatemala and Morocco (1929).[3] The Salesian houses in the world increased from 444 to 692, while the Salesians went up from 5,194 (4,733 SDB + 461 novices) to 8,904 (8,059 SDB + 895 novices), with a total increase of 3,710.[4]

According to some statistics, all of them however needing to be verified,[5] in the decade, 1,868 people, including professed, novices, aspirants (with some lay volunteers as well) left for the Missions – understood here simply as countries outside Europe. According to other sources there were a hundred or so less. The high point was the year of Don Bosco's beatification (1929) with 174 missionaries; on the other hand 172 was the figure of those setting out for the 50th anniversary of the Missions (1925).[6]

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[3] On 13 September 1928, Don Rinaldi stated in a session of the General Chapter: "Never before have our missions had such a great development especially in the East as at present [...] It is necessary not to forget those in America which need to be reinforced and reorganised". He continued saying that for four years it would be best not to accept any new missions or houses, so as to send the clerics to study Theology: Minutes of the General Chapter, 13 September 1928 in ASC D 873.

[4] M. WIRTH, *Da Don Bosco ai nostri giorni. Tra storia e nuove sfide.* Roma, LAS 2000, pp. 530-531.

[5] The statistics available in both the Salesian Central Archives and publications are imprecise, unreliable and often contradictory. A basic examination is required regarding the actual number of people leaving year by year, even on different dates, taking account however of those leaving for the second or third time (sometimes 30% of the total).

[6] By way of example: regarding places of origin, for the six years 1923-1928, out of 796 missionaries 453 came from Italy and 328 from Europe (statistics of the General Chapter XIII, 1929); the 165 leaving in 1927 came from 17 countries: 92 from Italy, 26 from Germany, 12 from Spain, 10 from Poland, 5 from Belgium, 3 from Brazil and from Ecuador, 2 from France, Argentina, Mexico and Yugoslavia and one from other countries (*Bollettino Salesiano*, October 1927). Regarding the destinations of missionaries leaving in 1929, 104 to America, 19 to India, 15 to Thailand, 12 to Palestine, 10 to Japan, 5 to China, 4 to Congo and 2 to Australia (*Bollettino Salesiano*, December 1929). Regarding status, out of 120 leaving in 1922, 28 were priests and brothers and 92 youths and clerics (*Bollettino Salesiano*, January 1923). In 1924 out of 167 leaving (32 in fact returning), 41 were priests, 77 clerics and 39 brothers (ASC A 8310111, Report to the Holy See). In 1928 those leaving were 108, of whom 15 priests, 95 clerics and 40 aspirants (ASC D 873 Minutes of the Superior Chapter, 29 August).

Limiting ourselves to the Far East and Australia which at present are our main concern, the *General Elenco of the members* in the years referred to shows the following number of missionaries:

Year	China	India	Thailand	Japan	Australia	Total
1923	16	24			6	46
1924	42	39			8	89
1925	69	63			9	141
1926	83	79			6	168
1927	98	96		9	6	209
1928	71[7]	105	28	8	19	231
1929	72	118	46	11	17	264
1930	72	129	65	21		287
1931	68	140	73	25		306

As regards "missions properly so-called", a statistic from the middle of the decade,[8] indicates 13 "huge territories entrusted entirely to the Salesians" in addition to another 12 "extremely important missionary works" in Turkey, Asia Minor, Palestine, Shanghai, Macao, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Cape of Good Hope, Australia, etc. From the same source we find, in the 1,077 "missionary works for youth" – though some clarification would be needed as to the precise meaning of "works" - 1,169 SDB and FMA were working divided as follows:

	Missions	Works	Personnel SDB+FMA
America	8	644	721
Asia	10	298	316
Africa	5	119	116
Australia	2	16	16 (SDB)

At the death of Don Rinaldi, the new *missiones ad gentes* were eight (which were added to the other previous eight): the Prefecture Apostolic

[7] The number had gone down considerably on account of the transfer of the novitiate from China to Thailand.

[8] In the issue of the *Bollettino Salesiano* dedicated to the 50th anniversary of the missions (1925).

of Assam; Missions of the Chago Paraguayo; Prefecture Apostolic of the *Alto Luapula* in the Belgian Congo; Prelature Apostolic of Porto Velho in Brazil; Archdiocese of Madras in India; Diocese of Krishnagar in India; Independent Missions of Miyazaki in Japan; Independent Missions of Ratburi in Thailand. To these should be added the provisional Vicariate Apostolic of Kimberley (1922-1928) and the Missions entrusted to Salesians but under the jurisdiction of an Ordinary who had entrusted them to Heung Shan in the Diocese of Macao.

Such a development of the Missions was due to a number of favourable circumstances among which cannot be denied the military exemption (provisional) for young students of religious institutes recognised as being prepared for the foreign missions (9 November 1923),[9] in addition, of course, to the continuing requests of the Holy See, and the willingness of the Salesian Society at both top and bottom. Among those at the top should be especially remembered Fr. Pietro Ricaldone (1870-1951), extremely active in his dual role as Prefect General at the side of the Rector Major (to whose competence *ex ufficio* some sort of responsibility for missionaries was already ascribed) and as delegate of the Rector Major for the Missions (from January 1924). Favouring his appointment, in addition to his undoubted personal gifts and his long experience as a Councillor for vocational and agricultural schools, came into play his experience of visiting the Salesian houses in Latin America (1908), North America (1911), Egypt and Palestine (1919) and parts of Europe (Spain, England, Belgium and France).

2.2. *The opening of houses for missionary formation*

Also following the request of several Provincials from Latin America present in Turin for the XII General Chapter, in summer 1922, Don Rinaldi launched the project of a formation house for aspirants to the missionary priesthood: the Cardinal Cagliero Institute named after the well-known missionary to Patagonia who that year was celebrating his diamond jubilee of ordination.[10] The work grew rapidly, thanks also to its important

[9] In Salesian circles there were 15 Institutes in Italy, and 16 abroad, including one in the Catholic mission of Shiu Chow in China and one in that of Shillong in India: cf list in *Atti del Capitolo Superiore*, 24 June 1924, n. 25, pp. 304-305.

[10] Minutes of the Superior Chapter, 18 July 1922, in ASC D 872. Prior to that, some Provincials paid for the support of late vocations (Sons of Mary) or for very young missionary aspirants who they would take back to their own countries.

recognition by the S. Congregation of Propaganda Fide[11] as a missionary institute "under its wing and enjoying all the rights and privileges of other similar institutes" and also the equally important civil recognition,[12] as a legal body with its own property "for the support in every way, religious, moral, material [...] of Salesian Missions abroad".

In the Superior Chapter in January 1925, preceded as a house for missionary aspirants by that of Penango (Alessandria), founded as a college in Don Bosco's lifetime, it was followed by similar houses at Foglizzo Canavese (Turin, 1926), at Cumiana (Turin, 1928 for missionaries working in agriculture), at Castelnuovo d'Asti (Turin, 1929), at Gaeta (Rome, 1930), at Bagnolo (Cuneo, 1931), at Turin-Rebaudengo (1931 for missionaries working in arts and trades). To these should be added one at Astudillo, Spain (1928)) and one at Shrigley in England (1931).[13]

Similar houses in individual provinces were discussed on account of the impossibility, also on financial grounds, of all coming to Piedmont, while it was still considered a good thing that all should spend a short time in Turin in order to get to know the superiors and their language, and to better imbibe the spirit of Don Bosco. The Chapter also remained firmly of the opinion that Missions should not be accepted by individual countries in order to preserve their hoped for international character;[14] others were of a different opinion however, since the very strong Italian component among the missionaries and the almost exclusive use of their language gave the impression of an excessively Italian mission, and therefore not conducive to encouraging either foreign financial support or vocations.

The contribution made to missionary works by these new foundations at home was enormous. In 1927, the total number of students was more than 600; in 1930 over 1,000.[15] This was also a response on the part of the

[11] Dated 30 April 1924, quoted in the *Bollettino Salesiano* for June 1924.

[12] Royal decree dated 13 January 1924, still effective today as "*Istituto Salesiano per le Missioni*".

[13] In the same year, there were plans for the opening of another house at Montodine (Crema, 1931), for brother catechists and available for all the works of spiritual, material and health assistance "which constitute a large part of missionary work". The situation was always quite fluid: in July 1927, the Superior Chapter discussed whether to move the missionaries from Foglizzo to the house of Turin-Martinetto which would be better for them; on 5 March 1930, it was decided that the house at Bagnolo would take the student aspirants from Foglizzo and from Castelnuovo, which would cater only for those for America. The aspirants at Gaeta would have to move to the north after middle school.

[14] Minutes of the Superior Chapter dated 13, 15, 21 January 1925: ASC D 872.

[15] *Bollettino Salesiano*, March 1930. As regards Salesians brought to Turin to study Philosophy and Theology, e.g. July 1927, Don Rinaldi mentions a total number of 176 (108 in the two years of Philosophy): ASC A 8290211.

Salesians to the appeal of the Holy See regarding the provision of lay personnel to teach arts and trades and the preparation of native catechists.[16] The *Bollettino Salesiano* in February 1924 called for lay volunteers of all professions (doctors, architects, surveyors, skilled workers, labourers, farmers...); in December 1927, Don Rinaldi referred directly to Salesian Brothers, in response to both a renewed appeal by Pius XI, and to the "growing vitality" given them by Don Bosco.[17]

2.3. *A missionary youth movement (1922...)*

It wasn't enough to found institutes or "apostolic schools" for missionary vocations. It was necessary to promote them. This was taken up by the *Associazione Gioventù Missionaria,* which having been started in Turin-Valdocco at the time of *Maximum Illud,* spread to many Salesian houses and to those of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, thanks to the support of Don Rinaldi. Enriched with indulgences and spiritual favours granted by the Pope in 1923, it had its own statutes, which described its purpose as follows: "1) to educate the young to love and support Vocations and the Missions with their prayers and offerings; 2) to promote Missionary Vocations and bring them to maturity".[18]

Then to provide a magazine for what was described as a "youth missionary movement", at the end of 1922 the Superior Chapter decided to publish a 16-page illustrated monthly magazine: *Gioventù Missionaria.* Although it was first thought that it would only be published during the preparatory stage of the silver jubilee of the Missions (1925), the magazine continued for decades, and following requests from abroad was published from 1926 onwards in Spanish, Portuguese, French, English and Polish.

This was done in such a way, however, that it did not have a negative effect on the *Bollettino Salesiano,* - edited in Turin in five languages and abroad in four – which was already in itself an extremely missionary oriented magazine, and which was requested to increase and make more attractive the space devoted to the Missions.[19]

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[16] Document of 20 May 1923, published in its entirety in the *Atti del Capitolo Superiore*, June 1923, n. 20, pp. 106-108.

[17] *Bollettino Salesiano*, December 1927.

[18] The Statutes-Regulations took into account the presence of adult members.

[19] Though the section on the missions often changed its name ("The Salesian Missions", "Life in our missions"), the *Bollettino Salesiano* itself introduced a missionary subtitle from 1927, becoming "monthly periodical for the cooperators of Don Bosco's works and missions".

2.4. *Vatican missionary exhibition (1925) and Salesians in Turin (1926)*

To strengthen existing missionary works and to promote new missionary projects, creating structures and finding fresh energy, a notable contribution was made by the solemn celebration for the 50th anniversary of the first missionary expedition.

Don Rinaldi had only just announced it officially,[20] when Pius XI announced for the same 1925 Holy Year an *International Missionary Exhibition*, to be held in the Vatican Palaces with the participation of all the Missionary Congregations and Institutes of the Catholic Church. The two dates coincided, and so in June 1923, Don Ricaldone presented to the Superior Chapter a vast programme of activities that the Chapter approved, and which was to be promoted by a Central Committee at Valdocco, under the presidency of Fr. Ricaldone himself. Through a series of circular letters and a very extensive correspondence,[21] it was possible to organise all the Salesian and FMA houses in such a way that the Salesian section in the Vatican exhibition met with general approval.

With items not sent to Rome and others, which arrived to replace those, which were not returned from the Vatican as they were destined by the Holy See to form part of the permanent exhibition at the Lateran, on 26 May, a similar Salesian Exhibition was opened in Turin. It was visited by 300,000 people and honoured by the constant presence of civil and religious authorities throughout the four months it was open.

In the meantime, the Rector Major had written a circular letter commemorating the 50th anniversary[22] in which, following up some of the concerns expressed in *Maximum Illud,* he asked for special prayers for the Missions, in particular on the 24th of each month;[23] in addition, he devoted himself to the promotion and recommendation of missionary vocations for young people and also adults (Sons of Mary), as well as supporting the Missions and missionaries[24] financially through various

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[20] *Atti del Capitolo Superiore*, January 1923, n. 17, p. 37.

[21] Preserved in ASC A 831; see also *Atti del Capitolo Superiore*, 24 June 1924, n. 25, pp. 296-297.

[22] *Atti del Capitolo Generale*, 24 June 1925, n. 30, pp. 364-373.

[23] In the *Bollettino Salesiano* of November 1923, all the Salesian houses in the world were invited to celebrate the Annual Mission Day on 11 November; then in 1927 the Holy See established World Mission Day.

[24] In October 1923, the *Bollettino Salesiano* gave 1,000 lire as the cost for the maintenance of a pupil at Turin-Valdocco, 1,500 lire for Ivrea and 1,800 lire for a native teacher and catechist.

practical initiatives (missionary celebrations, charity bazaars, sales of work and exhibitions of sacred vestments, collections organised by children, adults, families, wills and legacies).

2.5. *"Missionary" Congresses of Cooperators, of Youth and of Salesians (1925-1926)*

Preceded by the International Missionary Congress in Buenos Aires for the opening of the Centenary of the Missions (October 1925) and by other local and provincial congresses, at the same time as the Exhibition in Valdocco, the Cooperators (with the past pupils) held a Congress that was meant to celebrate the 50th anniversary of their foundation (1876). Naturally this too had a missionary aim fostered especially by the various organising committees and promoters. Great attention was placed on the aspect of cooperation both material and spiritual, even though it was not possible to take account of *Rerum Ecclesiae*, published in February 1926, after the programme had already been settled.

In their turn, young pupils in many Salesian houses between November 1925 and January 1926 held their own local, regional and national *Congresses* (about 800), in which they discussed missionary topics, producing and then publishing the Acts.

In the summer of 1926 at Turin-Valsalice, two similar Congresses were held, one for the Rectors of Europe and one for the Rectors of Italy. The fourth of six topics dealt with was regarding the Missions.[25] It was soon appreciated that it was first necessary to form a missionary *awareness* before being concerned about missionary *cooperation* and two points in particular were emphasised: the *importance* and the *urgency* of the problem: the first in so far as by the will of Christ the Church cannot fail to preach the Gospel throughout the world and, the Salesians on their part were bound to follow Don Bosco's prescriptions; the second in so far as the point was made by the "two famous Encyclicals *Magnun* (sic!) *illud* of Benedict XV (1919) and *Rerum Ecclesiae* (1926) of Pius XI".[26]

In the judgement of the Salesian Rectors, the urgency was also due to the need to combat the materialism that was spreading among the "pagans" who are being reached by "civilisation" (the West), to form a

[25] A full account in *Atti del Capitolo Superiore*, 24 September 1926, n. 36, pp. 502-507.
[26] *Ib.*, p. 502.

native clergy that would be capable of continuing the work of the missionaries should foreign missionaries be expelled, to prevent the spread of Protestantism and Islamism. As regards effective *cooperation*, three kinds of means were indicated: 1) above all prayer and "spiritual sacrifices", for which some specific suggestions were made; 2) vocations, to be cultivated by a series of practical initiatives to be implemented in the various houses; finally, 3) material means to be obtained in traditional or in new ways.

2.6. *Visit by Fr. Ricaldone to the Missions in the East (1927)*

The solemn celebrations of the 50th anniversary had scarcely finished when Don Rinaldi, considering that in previous years, members of the Superior Chapter had visited almost all the Salesian houses in Europe and America, responding to the needs of the Missions in Asia which "on account of the variety of races and for other reasons are very different from the Missions in the West", sent as a Visitor, the Prefect General Fr. Ricaldone, almost certainly the "one most suitable" also given his past experience.[27]

Sailing from Venice on 25 December 1925, he returned on 9 December 1926, after having visited practically all the Salesian houses and foundations in India, China, Japan, Thailand, passing also through Burma and Vietnam. I leave to other colleagues at this seminar the presentation of his journey and its consequences country by country. Here, it is sufficient to say that added to the travails of having to cross a continent with the means of transport then available (steamer, train, boat, ship, horse, sedan chair, on foot), he was faced with the hard work of meetings (with missionaries, Bishops, Prefects Apostolic, Religious Superiors, civil authorities), sermons, correspondence, dangers from brigands and local wars, which are all recorded in travel diaries, in his vast correspondence, and in reports. Fr. Ricaldone's experience was of a total immersion in the Missions of Asia, which, by his getting to know the religion and cultures, languages and customs, political and social situations, enabled him among other things on his return to organise, in collaboration with other Salesians, an intense campaign on behalf of the Missions through a series of very frequent conferences, slide shows and films, for youngsters and adults.

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[27] *Atti del Capitolo Superiore*, 24 December 1926, n. 37, p. 527.

2.7. *Missionary Crusade (1928)*

From Thailand, shortly before returning home, Fr. Ricaldone launched the idea of a "Missionary Crusade", aimed at collecting 1,000 bursaries each of 20,000 lire, from the interest on which it would be possible to support a missionary aspirant (1,000 lire), a catechist (500 lire) or cover the expenses of a student (200 lire).[28] It would also be possible to collaborate by making free offerings, of goods or materials. The names of benefactors would be published each month under the heading "Golden Book" in the *Bollettino Salesiano*.[29] For those who might have large sums of money available, Fr. Ricaldone suggested building at one's own expense houses for missionary aspirants.

Don Rinaldi welcomed the idea: on 24 March 1928, he told the Rectors about it and two months later, officially mentioned it to the Salesians;[30] the *Bollettino Salesiano* presented the project to its readers. And so while Count Rebaudengo offered to build a new institute in Turin at his expense, there was a real rush to provide missionary bursaries among readers of the *Bollettino Salesiano*, among cooperators, past pupils, friends and admirers of Don Bosco and of the Salesian Society, identified by name or anonymous, an enthralling competition broke out between youngsters from Salesian houses. Businesses too offered their products.

2.8. *Beatification of Don Bosco, 13th General Chapter (1929)*

1929 was the year of the apotheosis. For the beatification of Don Bosco on 2 June, the Holy See granted permission for a delay in the celebration of the XIII General Chapter; the missionary expedition of

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[28] He wrote to Don Rinaldi: "why doesn't [...] the successor of Don Bosco raise his voice and invite everyone to start a crusade on behalf of the people in the East, as Don Bosco did for the peoples and the lands in the West? [...] it is the East especially that today needs to be the object of the concern, the care, the anxious work of people of good will. Here we cannot, we must not shut our eyes to it. What are involved here are the great concerns, the vital problems for the future of these peoples. A Christian East would be a guarantee for the security, the peace of the world, while if it were to fall victim to Bolshevik, hatred and anarchy it would be a constant and terrifying threat".

[29] Subsequently, the names for the various bursaries would be published every two or three months; in addition, it was decided that to open new bursaries a starting figure of 5,000 lire would be required, while smaller sums would be used to complete those still open.

[30] *Atti del Capitolo Superiore*, 24 May 1928, n. 44, p. 660.

that year was the largest to date and perhaps in the whole of Salesian history; more than 100 missionaries for America and 50 for Asia.

For the consideration of the Chapter members assembled in Turin between 9 and 20 July, a scheme (the third) was presented with the title: "A structured development of our Missions in the spirit of our Salesian system and method of education and in conformity with the norms issued by ecclesiastical authority".[31] In presenting it, Don Rinaldi had written: "In the first place it is a matter of gathering together the experience of everyone for it to contribute to the common good: then to agree on the way ahead which must bear the Salesian seal. It is necessary that the Superior understands the difficulties of confreres far away and that the confreres far away know the mind of the Superiors well. There has to be unity of aims so as to achieve the wishes and the hopes of the Ven. Don Bosco. The Holy Father, Pius XI also wants us to apply in the Missions the educational methods given us by our Salesian Founder".[32]

In the Chapter, the scheme on the Missions, subdivided into 11 points (Missionary Spirit, Missionary Vocations and missionary formation houses, the Mission [forms and works], Ecclesiastical Superior and Religious Superior [their relationship], Goods of the Missions and Goods of the Society, Native Vocations, Norms for missionaries, Relationships and questions of subsidies, Mission Offices general and particular, Propaganda, the one in charge of the Missions) was approved far too quickly (a few hours!) as the "Regulations *ad experimentum*" with the appointment of a Commission with the task of going further into certain points for which there had not been an agreed conclusion.[33]

The three articles (quite general) about native vocations, which might have created problems, were easily accepted after an intervention by Fr. Ricaldone, who pointed out how it was necessary to obey the Pope, as Don Bosco would.[34] The point that led to most discussion was that regarding the juridical relationship between the ecclesiastical superior and the religious superior (as well as the distinction between the goods of the "local Church" and those of the "Salesian Society") bearing in mind

[31] *Atti del Capitolo Superiore*, 6 January 1929, n. 47, p. 711.

[32] *Ib.*

[33] *Atti del Capitolo Superiore*, 24 October 1929, n. 50, pp. 814-823.

[34] In this regard a report from the Salesian Secretary General dated 22 June 1926 sent to Paris, indicated in native vocations "a certain instability" and also the danger of nationalism, on account of which it did not seem that it would be possible "gradually to completely replace all the Europeans in their country", while it should be possible to entrust them with "the direction of a House": ASC A 8300143.

that present in the hall were Provincials and Prefects Apostolic (Fr. Canazei and Msgr. Versiglia among others) obviously with different points of view. Don Rinaldi tried to mediate saying that the problem had already been considered elsewhere without an agreed solution being arrived at, and that it had been decided that charity should be the guide for the two Superiors.

Some months later, on 8 December 1929, the Congregation of *Propaganda Fide* issued an *Instructio* on the matter, which meant that Don Rinaldi, the following year had to submit for revision what the General Chapter had provisionally established, requesting and proposing contributions for clarification. Fr. Canazei, among others, did not fail to express once again his precise and well-articulated opinion in July 1930,[35] at the same time that he was appointed Vicar Apostolic of Shiu Chow, in the place of Msgr. Versiglia, killed with Fr. Caravario on the previous 25 February.

3. Some problem issues

At this point, in view of the indisputable reawakening and development of Salesian missionary activity in the twenties so as to arrive by the middle of the decade in fourth place for the number of missionaries (935, without counting the 1,647 Salesians spread throughout 145 SDB foundations in the Americas) and fifth place for the number of missions (28)[36] – one can still legitimately ask oneself whether perhaps there were also within it all some problematic aspects, some weak points. The reply can only be in the affirmative, even though the scarcity and the limitations of the studies and research available at present prevent us from forming an accurate judgement in this regard. However, on the basis of the documentation consulted for this presentation, a provisional view could be expressed as follows:

1. In the decisions of government and in its praxis the Salesian Society, spiritually guided by Don Rinaldi and at the operational level by Fr. Ricaldone, for the most part continued to operate according to the cultural and religious schemes of Don Bosco. On all sides, the need to follow the

[35] The document is preserved in ASC A 8300157. In ASC the section "missions" in relation to these years is very full and would deserve a suitable study.

[36] So one reads in a letter of Don Rinaldi to the Superior Council of the Pontifical Work of the Propagation of the Faith, dated 31 December 1926: ASC A 8310123.

traditional Salesian educational model was constantly affirmed, as in various audiences Pius XI had insisted with Don Rinaldi. In the missionary context therefore, the Salesian Society of the time also remained basically rooted in the "charismatic phase" of the foundation, without succeeding in producing the necessary evolution of the charism received, still including a strong centralisation of government, even though tempered and enlightened by visits that were necessarily quick so as to become aware of the situation on the ground and by personal conversations or by correspondence with missionaries.

2. With some praiseworthy exceptions, it does not seem that the changed ecclesiological-missionary approach requested or taken for granted in pontifical documents or a more careful missiological reflection had been fully appreciated. The suggestions and the directives of the two encyclicals in question, while recognised as the "Magna Carta" of missionary work, were taken into consideration mainly for what they had to say about the urgency, the importance and the promotion, especially at home, of vocations; not so much for what might raise questions about the missionary methods adopted, or indeed might suggest a quality change in those places where Salesian evangelisation had recently begun. Proving more of an obstacle to "inculturation", especially in the East, were the missionary experiences in progress in America, which were not easily adapted in other places, the greater attention constantly being given to practical-organisational aspects of the Missions rather than to reflection on the theory, the very limited decision-making powers of the authorities on the periphery.

3. A certain self-sufficiency in the Congregation prevented the development of a better organisation of all missionary activity that would have meant on the part of central and peripheral bodies of the Society, accuracy in data, precision in terminology, coordination with pontifical authorities with responsibility for the Missions, so as to ensure that the information requested was submitted carefully, regularly and speedily. At various levels including the economic one the absence of a specific office for the Missions in Turin was clearly felt, one which could have encouraged and collected data and news and submitted it frequently to a secretary in Rome, given this exclusive role.[37]

[37] This was the opinion of the President of the "Central Council of the Propagation of the Faith", Msgr. Angelo Roncalli (future Pope John XXIII) and of other authoritative members of the Congregation of *Propaganda Fide* who refer in this regard to the inferior state of the Salesians in respect of other Religious Institutes: cf. vast documentation preserved in ASC A 831.

4. However, the fact should not be undervalued that the Salesian Society was and saw itself to be a "*society of educators*" working on an international scale (to which the Holy See had entrusted missions *ad gentes)* and not a "*Missionary Institute*" in the strict sense of the term.[38] Therefore, while it considered as "missionary works" all the foundations outside Europe while distinguishing in mission lands between "works that were strictly missionary" and "auxiliary works", the Holy See recognised as missions de facto and by law – and therefore financed - only the Vicariates and Prefectures and those territories of the "infideli" destined to become such. Consequently the works that the Congregation of Propaganda Fide considered "secondary" (schools, orphanages, colleges, nurseries, leper colonies...) in contrast to those directly concerned with evangelisation (catechesis, sacramentalisation....) for the Salesians, they were on the contrary "primary" and often absorbed more of the financial and personnel resources than those places where they were working directly for the *plantatio ecclesiae*. Direct catechetical activity in the few dozen missions *ad gentes* not infrequently was reduced to second place after the hundreds of schools and colleges in the extra-European areas where the young people could also find the best conditions for growing in the faith. This situation gave rise to more occasions for conflict between the religious superior and the ecclesiastical superior (when these were different people), especially if the second was a bishop or vicar apostolic.

Conclusion

We can conclude indicating some possible areas for research:

1. The presence among the Salesian "missionaries" of a large number of "youngsters" (novices, pre-novices, aspirants) and of "young men" (clerics) distinguished from "adults" (priests or brothers), necessarily led

[38] Dated 31 December 1927, Don Rinaldi communicated to the Holy See that the Salesian Society was divided into 39 provinces with 44 houses for aspirants, 31 novitiates and 27 studentates of Philosophy and Theology, "which form and generously provide a large number of personnel for the missions". As regards "institutions opened for the formation of exclusively missionary personnel (...) to respond to zeal for the missions and following the directives of the Supreme Pontiffs" he mentions three: Ivrea with 162 pupils, Foglizzo with 182, and Penango with 179: ASC A 8310133. Two years later, he was in the position to be able to add three others (Castelnuovo, Cumiana, Rebaudengo): letter of 27 January 1929, in ASC A 8310313.

to various consequences in the set up and organisation of the Missions. Which? This innovative option for youth by the Salesian Society, was it a risky step or a winner? What is the "perseverance rate" of the very young missionaries?

2. The Missions were entrusted by the Holy See to the Salesian Society as it was. What was the theological and specifically missiological preparation that the Salesian Society gave its missionary priests? What was the formation, cultural in general and missionary in particular, given in the missionary aspirantates in Italy and in the houses of formation in mission lands?

3. The opening of Salesian Missions in the twenties in Asia (and in Australia)[39] changed the previous internal balance of the Salesian Society. What significance did this missionary opening up in new continents have for the old and more recent missions in America? What was the influence on East Asian experiences of those of America?

4. In the political area, the Salesian Society, with its marked Italian background, following its own tradition, refrained from any direct or indirect commitment, without on that account giving up some state contribution that was not too demanding politically. Were there forms of nationalism in the twenties? What kind? In which countries?

5. For a better understanding of the Salesian Missions comparison with those of other Religious Orders and Missionary Institutes ancient and modern is useful. What were the objectives, the methods, the strategies, the preparation of personnel, the results of their missions in the same geographical areas where the Salesians were working?

6. Over 70 years after the events, it is perhaps possible to attempt an evaluation of the results in terms of education-evangelisation. For such a survey, it will be necessary to study what might be the most appropriate indicators, bearing in mind the difficulties of a charismatic, structural, circumstantial and personal nature to which we have simply referred.

[39] Africa would have to be considered separately. In the twenties, there were Salesian works on the Mediterranean coast, in the Republic of the Congo and in South Africa.

THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN CHINA IN 1920-30 AND ITS EFFECTS ON SALESIANS

*Domingos Leong SDB**

This article would like to present a general view of the political situation of China in the period of 1920-30. Even though China has succeeded in establishing a republic through the revolution, she was still suffering from the civil wars and foreign powers invasion. It greatly affected the daily life of the people, and also, giving a great hindrance for Salesians, along with other missionaries, in their evangelization and educational endeavors.

1. Introduction

The Republic of China was born on 1 January 1912, the result of the 1911 Revolution. It brought to an end the 267 years reign of the Manchu dynasty and centuries of imperial rule in China.

The first attempt at forming a strong central government ended in failure because of the intervention of the new military and political strongmen which forced Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the leader of the revolutionary party and first President of the Republic, into exile. As Sun tried to establish a more effective political and military base in the South, China ended up having two national governments: one in Peking under the control of the northern warlords, the other in Canton with Dr. Sun at its head. Obviously the two only controlled limited areas and civil wars easily broke out. The 19th century Unequal Treaties, left over by the Manchu dynasty, allowed foreign powers to exercise control over certain areas of the country. These "Foreign Concessions" practically monopolized international trade for their own short-term benefit, totally ignoring the long-term development of the Chinese people. Internal weakness and foreign exploitation were the roots of the May 4th Movement born in 1919 by the will of China's outraged young intellectuals desirous to save their Motherland.

* Fr. Domingos Leong is professor of Liturgy at the Holy Spirit Seminary of the Diocese of Hong Kong.

2. Dr. Sun Yat-sen and the New Republic

2.1. *Setting up of the Canton Government*

Throughout the 1920s, China was in chaos, with regional military chiefs, known as warlords, holding sway. War easily broke out between North and South. It was one of these periodic clashes that Fr. Carlo Braga referred to in the May 1922 issue of the Bolletino Salesiano: fear of being forced to carry provisions for the army had induced all workers to abandon the construction site of St. Joseph's Institute in Hosai and flee to the mountains.[1]

In the meantime Dr. Sun Yat-sen had proposed his Three Principles of the People to guide the revolution. To curb the excesses of the warlords and to unify the Country, he appointed Chiang Kai-shek, a young officer trained in Japan, as President of the Whampoa Military Academy in Canton.

By 1923, Sun had managed to form a viable government in Canton (today's Guangzhou) in alliance with the newly born Communist Party, whose links with peasants and workers he thought would strengthen the revolutionary cause, and the help of Soviet advisers. In October of that year he personally led the Revolutionary Army in the Northward Expedition to Shiu Chow.[2] As he was about to order his troops north, a coup in Peking overthrew Marshal Tsao-Kun, head of the Peking government. Among the insurgents there were some of Sun's Kuomintang Party members. This strengthened Sun's hand and forced Peking's weak new leadership to call on him and come to Peking to discuss plans for the peaceful unification of the Country. Dr. Sun's long and untiring journey, which he undertook to rally the people to the unification cause, led him to an untimely death on 12 March 1925. These events, and the May 30th incident (the killing of striking workers and students by British police in Shanghai on 30 May 1925) enormously increased the national revolutionary consciousness especially among the young.

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[1] Guido Bosio, *Martiri in Cina*. Torino 1977, p. 190. In July 1922 the city was caught in the middle of a furious armed conflict. The situation did not improve throughout the second half of 1922. *Ibid.*, pp. 234-235.

[2] Msgr. Versiglia refers to the depressing results of these wars in his 1923 report to Propaganda. *Ibid.*

3. Chiang Kai-sek at the head of the Chinese Nationalist Party (Kuomintang leads the Northward Expedition in 1926-1927)

The Northward Expedition to curb the warlords was Dr. Sun's earnest wish and it was Chiang Kai-shek's major objective after he took over the responsibility of the national revolution. On 9 July 1926, Chiang officiated at the oath-taking ceremony for the Northward Expedition in Canton. Immediately after the ceremony, he led the army in the campaign against the northern warlords, the first leg being done by train to Shiu Chow, from where the troops began their slow trek on foot to Hunan. Fr. G. Guarona, the Pro-Vicar in Shiu Chow, in his 1926 annual report which he penned on behalf of an absent Msgr. Versiglia, wrote of the passage of thousands and thousands of troops who for months stationed in the city, stressing the discipline, respectful behaviour and smart new uniforms of a modernized army, almost unrecognizable and in sharp contrast with the troops he had seen one year before.[3] The soldiers he saw were probably from Chiang's first army, the most disciplined and best equipped of the eight armies, which made up the expedition.

The National Revolutionary Army, after five months of bloody offensives and heavy casualties, secured the two provinces of Hunan and Hubei, moved in from the Yangtze River, and captured Nanking and Shanghai in March 1927, accomplishing the first stage of the Northward Expedition. The battle-weary troops, plagued by disease, that entered Shanghai were not the disciplined troops that had filed past Shiu Chow six-eight months earlier: they occupied the building that housed the St. Joseph Institute and turned it into a hospital for cholera stricken soldiers, leaving only a third floor dormitory for the pupils to stay. Leftist unions in Shanghai had organized strikes in an attempt to control the city and had turned against foreign interests. It was against them that Chiang, who had by then steered to the right, launched a ruthless purge.

4. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP)

After the establishment of the Republic of China, Socialism and Western ideology were introduced into China. As early as 1919, during the May 4th Movement, Peking University began to organize a Marxism study society. Communism was then only an object of academic study.

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[3] *Ibid.*, p. 267.

That same year, Soviet Russia announced its decision to forego all the rights that the former Russian Monarchy had won in China through "Unequal Treaties". Some Chinese intellectuals admired communism and the newly formed Soviet regime. Chen Du-Xiu, Li Da-Zhao and others spread communist propaganda, inducing some Chinese youths to embrace communism and many more to abandon Christianity. In 1920, Lenin advocated international expansionism and sent agents from the Communist International in Moscow to China to assist Chen and followers. They were instrumental in the founding of the CCP in Shanghai in July 1921.

4.1. *The Kuomintang's Alliance with Soviet Russia and Accommodation with Chinese Communists*

Lenin held Dr. Sun Yat-sen in high regard for his revolutionary accomplishments. Soviet Russia repeatedly showed signs of friendship toward him. In 1922, following a series of foreign affairs setbacks and internal rebellion, Sun was persuaded by the Soviet agents that if his Kuomintang would ally with the communists, whose numbers were still small, they could tap into the enormous latent energies of China's peasants and industrial workers, who were just beginning to emerge on the political landscape. Apparently convinced that his organization could control the communists within its ranks, Sun agreed to a formula by which individual communists could enter the Kuomintang as members. In return, the Soviet Union provided Sun with military advisers, arms, ammunition and technical help in strengthening his political organization.

When Dr. Sun passed away in Peking in March 1925, the Soviet and Chinese Communists managed to split the KMT into "left" and "right" factions. The left opposed Chiang's plans for a Northward Expedition and only nominally gave in because the expedition was Dr. Sun's last wish, trying to boycott Chiang's victorious progress at every step for fear his prestige might grow unchallenged.

After communist activists had induced the workers to take control of Shanghai and turn against foreign interests, thereby putting Chiang in a difficult position, senior KMT members called for a campaign to save the party and demanded that all communist elements be expelled. Chiang, as the commander-in-chief of the National Revolutionary Army, on 12 April 1927 ordered the Red labour pickets disarmed. Local labour unions, actually gagster hands in disguise, moved in swiftly against the Commu-

nist-led strikers, leaving hundreds dead and arresting several hundred more. When two months later, Fr. Ricaldone visited Shanghai, he could move about without incidents, but it was clear that a war was going on: everywhere soldiers and barbed wire and the river teeming with warships.[4]

4.2. *The Sha Meen Incident (23-6-1925), the Hong Kong, Shanghai and Canton boycott and the Anti-Imperialist Movement*

Boycott became an important weapon in the hands of anti-imperialist forces. In May 1925 the workers of Shanghai had launched a boycott and a protest against some Japanese employers for the exploitation, beating and maltreatment of Chinese workers, and demanded to take back all foreign concessions. More than 2,000 students marched through the International Concession in support of the striking workers. The British police fired at the protesters, killing and wounding many, in what was called the "May 30th Incident".

National rage spread like wildfire in other foreign enclaves. In June, workers in Hong Kong and in the Sha Meen Concession of Canton walked out in support of their colleagues in Shanghai. Some 200,000 workers in Hong Kong and Canton joined the strike. On 23 June, the protesters were parading along the outer bank of the canal that marked the border of the Sha Meen Concession, shouting slogans against imperialism and the unequal treaties. Gunshots were fired at the Concession, at which the British returned fire, leaving almost a hundred dead and several hundred wounded, in what was known as the "Sha Meen Incident". The Canton government strongly protested, while the KMT favoured the closure of all British and French interests, who responded by beefing up their defenses. As many British merchants moved back to Hong Kong, hundreds of thousands of Hong Kong workers deserted the colony and went back to Canton to support and unite with the strikers. A four months' strike was waged in Shanghai. In Canton, a boycott of British goods would last for a year and a half completely paralyzed the port of Hong Kong.

It was at the height of these events, in June 1925, that Fr. I. Canazei had to pass through pickets of strikers in Canton and had no choice but trek on foot most of the 240km separating Canton from Shiu Chow. War

[4] Ricaldone to Rinaldi, 6 June 1927, ASC F 158.

between the Yunnan army and the Guangdong army was raging: corpses were strewn everywhere. On his return trip he happened to be in Canton on 22 June precisely when the Sha Meen incident was starting to unfold. He prudently boarded the Macao bound ship, from where he observed events, and reached Macao the morning of 24 June. In July, he accompanied the students of Philosophy from Hosai (Shiu Chow) to Heung Shan and Macao for the holidays. In August it seemed as if war would break out anytime: as he reached Shiu Chow he listened to the advice of Msgr. Versiglia and moved all the novices to the safety of Macao in what turned out to be a difficult and expensive trip.[5] The rest of the missionaries decided to remain at their posts.

As of July 1926, with the launching of the Northern Expedition and first victories gained by the National Revolutionary Army, the focus of revolution shifted away from the strike, which by September 1926 had effectively ended.

4.3. *The Soviets in Kwangtung*[6]

Chiang's April 1927 move to rid the KMT of Communists was carried out both in Shanghai and Canton. Troops began amassing again in Kwangtung and other southern provinces. When preparing to visit Shiu Chow in July 1927, Fr. Ricaldone reported 40,000 troops marching on Canton. At the end of September, his departure from Shiu Chow was held up by the southward journey to Canton of yet another 50,000 Bolshevik troops who "had switched allegiance".[7] The south became the theatre of confused civil war battles, as alliances were made and broken. In November, war broke out between Kwangtung and Kwangsi. General Chang Fa-kwei withdrew his troops, thus opening the way to infiltration by communists among the military and strengthening their potential for revolt. Together with peasants, workers and military force, the CCP staged an uprising in Canton, hoping to capture the city, accelerate the uprising of the whole province, and seize political power.

On 11 December 1928, after more than ten hours of fighting, the Communists managed to control much of Canton. In the afternoon, "the

[5] *Cronaca Ispettoriale* 1923-1930, pp. 21-24.

[6] Cf *GuangZhou Qi Yi* www.unitedcn.com/01ZGZZ/21DI2/new_page_1556.htm; and *GuangZhou Su Wei Ai Xuan Yan* www.gmw.cn/content/2005-02/19/content_182825.htm

[7] Ricaldone to Rinaldi, 31.7.1927 and 25.9.1927, ASC F 158.

establishment of the Canton Soviet (Commune)" was announced: political power now belonged to the workers, peasants and soldiers; imperialism would be overthrown and the warlords suppressed.

The following day, Chang Fa-kwei recalled his forces and easily defeated the outnumbered Communists: the revolt had lasted three days. The Communist troops dispersed and one faction withdrew into the Shiu Chow area. All along, communist officers were holding sway in town: in August and October 1927, Msgr. Versiglia had to fend off attempts by troops to occupy the Don Bosco Institute and the Bishop's House.[8] An anti-christian demonstration prepared for Christmas day in 1927 failed. Leftist troops remained active throughout 1928 both in the city and in the countryside.

5. Christianity and Modern China, especially in the area of education

Christianity and China's encounter in the 1920's present both positive and negative aspects.

5.1. *Positive aspects*

In the history of republican China, there was a short "golden" period during which Christianity was popular. Many early revolutionists had embraced the christian faith: they had a strong sense of expectation of a "wealthy and strong nation". They showed great interest in western ideas, including religious ones.

A great percentage of young people engaged in revolution were Christians. Just for example, 65% of the officers in the Kwangtung government were Christians. Because of the backwardness in China, the intellectuals thought they had to "wake-up" the people and release them from the burden of their traditions. They rejected traditional culture and opposed Confucianism, hungering for western ideas and hoping they would solve the problems, which China was facing. It aroused young people's curiosity for Christianity and many expected it would lead the way to the nation's salvation. This curiosity was really "pragmatically" and not "religiously" inspired!

[8] G. Bosio, *Martiri in Cina*, p. 296.

5.2. *Negative aspects:*

5.2.1. Anti-Christianity Movement

This "golden" period for the evangelization in China did not last long. Nationalism was deeply rooted among the Chinese intellectuals, and some considered imported Christianity a cultural invasion.

From 1919 to 1927, there was strong hostility towards Christianity among students and government officials. They organized a series of anti-Christian movements, such as the "Anti-Religion Act" and "the Declaration of the Anti-Christian Alliance", established in Peking in May 1922. This was a non-governmental organization linked to communism. It criticized Christianity as forerunner of capitalism and as anti-scientific, restricting the thought and poisoning the minds of young people.

In August 1924, the KMT and CCP jointly re-organized the "Anti-Christian Alliance", and launched an "Anti-Christian Week" on 22 to 27 December.

5.2.2. Education Reform (1926-27) and its effects on Religious Education in China

Cai Yuan-Pei, a famous educator and President of Peking University, wrote that "Education should be independent from any influences of religion and political parties. It should not turn them into products of ideologies and tools for specific usages". Cai believed that political parties and churches had hidden agendas and aims, hence he was against the presence of a theology faculty in universities. Only pure academic study and research, such as, history of religions and comparative study of religions, were allowed in the faculty of philosophy. He opposed Bible or catechism classes in schools and the involvement of missionaries in education, etc. Foreigners could be considered for the post of college or university heads under condition that they did not favour evangelization and that religion would not be included in the curriculum.[9]

At a national education council held in 1924, some participants suggested that foreigners be banned altogether from educational services,

[9] Pei-qing, Sun (ed.), *Zhong Guo Jiao Yu Shi,* Hua Dong Shi Fan Da Xue Chu Ban She. Shanghai, 2000, pp. 398-399.

and that evangelization, the teaching of the Bible and all religious services be prohibited in schools. If christian schools accepted these conditions, they would totally lose their character as christian schools. Christians clarified their stance stating that "there is no contradiction between christian schools and patriotic education; teaching religion in schools does not hinder the educational objective and contributes to the construction of society and nation".[10]

At the time of the May 30th incident in 1925, Anti-Christian and Anti-Imperialist ideologies went hand-in-hand. From 1926-1927, more than 3,000 missionaries, mainly protestant, left China and many schools and hospitals were forced to shut down or were confiscated. The Apostolic Delegate Celso Costantini appealed to Catholic missionaries to remain at their posts: the appeal gave Fr. Ricaldone sufficient ammunition to defend the decision of keeping his Salesians in Shanghai in 1927 notwithstanding the very dramatic situation. The Anti-Christian movement lasted until April 1927. From that time on Church and religion lost their appeal among the Chinese.

In the wake of these changes, in January 1927, Fr. G. Guarona, the Pro-Vicar of the Shiu Chow Vicariate Apostolic, wrote a letter to the missionaries explaining the new legislation.[11]

The aim of the government is to abolish completely the control of schools by foreigners. A few days earlier it has published the following regulations:

I. All schools, even private one, shall have a Chinese as Director.
II. The word "private" shall appear in the name and on the stationary of the school.
III. All teaching staff shall possess teaching diplomas.
IV. The textbooks adopted shall be those approved by the Education Department.
V. The teaching of religion is not allowed.[12]
VI. Foreigners can be 'advisers'.
VII. All schools run by foreigners or foreign missions shall have a government commissar check the execution of the programs.

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[10] WEI-MIN, GU, *Ji Du Jiao Yu Jin Dai Zhongguo Shehui*. Shanghai Renmin Chu Ban She, 1996, pp. 420ff.
[11] ASC F 160.
[12] "Anti-foreigner and anti-Christian conference will be given" handwritten addition by Canazei.

At last in 1928, when the Nationalist Government gained control over the whole country, it announced the new policy of withdrawing educational rights from Christian churches. All Christian schools had to register and because of that, many missionaries who were involved in education had to leave China.

6. The effects on the Salesian Missions[13]

The history of the China Province is full of episodes that show the hard time our work had to face during this period. The following are mentioned as examples for you to read.

6.1. *Student protests in Shiu Chow and new school legislation (1925)*

Since there were Russian "counsellors" and "instructors" aiming at sovietizing China, they organized unions for workers, students and peasant farmers. They instilled hatred for the missionary, for religion, for the foreigner – for all foreigners except Russians! Foreigners were all inveterate imperialists – all, except the Russians. And all missionaries were the "running dogs of the imperialists". With the intent of bringing China into conflict with the western nations they encouraged and instigated attacks on property belonging to foreigners, on missions and on the Concessions.

The "May 30th Incident" in Shanghai was the occasion for a big protest parade of students, soldiers and ordinary citizens, through the streets of the cities of China.

During this period, the students in Shiu Chow were allowed to join the Student League, although initially the Superiors had been reluctant to give permission. This Union was engaged in promoting propaganda against religion but the pupils of Don Bosco College and Help of Christians College, timely sensitized by Fr. Braga, were able to refute the specious arguments and crude accusations leveled by the students of other colleges. Appealing to the Constitution, which guaranteed freedom of conscience and reminding all that the Father of the Fatherland had been a Christian,

[13] Mario RASSIGA, *A Short Historical Account of the Salesian Work in China (1906-1930)*, translated by BERNARD TOHILL. Hong Kong, 1973.

they succeeded in containing the struggle within the limits of patriotism, without it spilling over into the arena of religion.

The mission still had to face the thorny problem of the schools. Catholic schools barely managed to obtain accreditation, submitting to the new ordinance, which, not surprisingly, forbade the teaching of religion during school hours. The Salesians adapted to the situation, bowing to the pressure of the authorities. They held on to their schools, and the religious instruction that had been banned from the classroom made its way back in the guise of moral and civic instruction.

6.2. *Occupation of Nantao by troops and pull out of Salesians (Shanghai 1927)*

In March 1927, as the Revolutionary Army from the south was closing in on Shanghai, a general strike was declared. The strikers, who were armed, took over the administration of the city, intimidating many people in the process. On the 26th, the sad news was received of the deaths of two Jesuit priests, Frs. Vanara and Dugout, Italian and French respectively. They were killed by the revolutionaries in Nanking. The Japanese Consul was also murdered by the same people, in the same city, and some British and Americans were wounded.

In such a threatening situation the Salesians thought of taking refuge in the Concessions. To do so would have been relatively easy for the Superiors but none of them thought of abandoning their boys. It was at this juncture that the Italian Consul-General, wishing to assure himself of the safety of the confreres, promised to support the pupils who went with them to a place of safety. And so, the Superiors with their boys reached the Sacred Heart Hospital on the evening of 26th where the good Sisters hurriedly prepared for them a corner of the building. Afterwards, some of the boys went home. On 3 April, the Rector and cleric Nolan took some boys back to the school, and some more left in the evening. On the 7th, the school was occupied by over 1,000 soldiers, and on the 11th, the Salesians left the hospital for the M.E.P. Procure while the boys returned to Nantao. All this time a reaction in favor of the Nationalists was growing in strength, and there was fighting around our institute.

General Chiang Kai-shek had understood that the strikers were set on taking over the Concessions, a step that would have involved him in a struggle with the Western Powers, thereby hindering him in the pursuit of

his immediate objective, the one nearest his heart – namely, the reunification of all China. And this explains the change and the reaction. The strategy succeeded; the Concession was respected; order was restored in the city and the troops from the South resumed their march northwards.

The political instability in China, especially in Shanghai, pushed the Superiors to decide to move the Salesians, especially clerics to a place of safety. An agreement was reached and signed in September 1927 by Msgr. Valtorta, the Bishop of Hong Kong and Fr. Peter Ricaldone, the Extraordinary Visitor to the Province. It stipulated that St. Louis School was now entrusted to the Salesians. Immediately, the Superiors pulled out the Salesians in formation both from Shanghai and Macau and set up a formation house in St. Louis School in Hong Kong.

6.3. *The capture of Fr. Umberto Dalmasso in Nam Hung, Shiu Chow (1929)*

In 1929, the reaction to the communists in Nam Hung had been ferocious, much to the exasperation of the communists themselves who, being powerless in the urban areas, gave vent to their vengeance in the country side, sowing terror everywhere with their death squads. Moreover, armed bands of communists roamed the nearby Kiangsi Province, where the recall to the south of most of the regular troops left the area defenseless. On 1 June, Fr. Dalmasso and three other priests were preparing to celebrate the feast of Mary Help of Christians at nearby Li Hei Kiao. It was clear that something had happened in the town and Fr. Dalmasso rushed off towards the town on his bicycle. He met a long queue of people fleeing from the town and as he was approaching, he perceived the gates were closed and wanted to obtain information from the bystanders, but suddenly, about 50 communist soldiers, wearing armbands and carrying flags, appeared and, catching sight of the foreign missionary, surrounded him and took him under arrest. Fr. Dalmasso tried to explain to the junior officer in charge who he was, showing him his visiting card, and explaining why he was, at that time, in that particular place.

Actually, he was held up by the troops of General Pang Tak Wai, who was leading the guerilla warfare in Shiu Chow. The communists began their withdrawal over the mountain roads before dawn on 5th and Fr. Dalmasso was obliged to go with them. They were expecting a handsome ransom from the Bishop before he would be freed. The exhausting

marches were proving too much for him; he was utterly exhausted and, unaware of Monsignor's efforts to free him, he was also discouraged. After his unceasing pleading with the general for his release for almost two weeks, Fr. Dalmasso was finally set free. The general offered some advice about the dangers he might encounter on his way back to his mission, and reminded him not to combat communism. Fr. Dalmasso showed no great interest in what he was being told, and, instead, asked for a pass or safe-conduct he could show to sentinels when stopped by them. Pang wrote out the permit himself and gave it to him together with two dollars which Dalmasso refused but which Pang forced into his pocket.

After almost two weeks of captivity, Fr. Dalmasso was safely home and was warmly welcomed by his parishioners. Less than a year later, Msgr. Versiglia and Fr. Caravario were facing the same fate while on their way to Lin Chow. Unfortunately, they were murdered while trying to protect the girls whom they were accompanying.

Conclusions

As we have seen, in 1920-30, China was in a chaotic situation, politically, socially, financially and even in its attitude towards religion. Despite these difficulties, our pioneer Salesian missionaries bravely adapted themselves to the various situations.

They have to learn a new language, totally different from European languages, and even many dialects spoken in different areas. Fr. Caravario was in China for less than six years and had to learn Mandarin (the National Language) and Shanghaiese, Portuguese in Timor, Cantonese and Hakka when he was sent to Shiu Chow.

For most of the 1920s they lived in danger, or even in life-threatening situations. They were called to protect their flocks from the harassment by bandits and soldiers. Some gave their blood: Msgr. Versiglia and Fr. Caravario in 1930 and Frs. Bassano Lareno, Vincenzo Munda and John Matkowics during the Japanese occupation.

It is in difficult circumstances that ordinary people show outstanding qualities of courage, dedication and faith and even the ordinary things they accomplish acquire added value. Our generation enjoys the fruit of their efforts and sacrifices: we owe them respect and gratitude.

THE BIRTH OF THE CHINA PROVINCE AND THE EXPANSION OF THE SALESIAN WORK IN EAST ASIA (1926-1927)

*Carlo Socol SDB**

Introduction

The China Mission, which started in 1906, was established as an autonomous entity on 1 January 1923, when the *Visitatoria della China* was erected, comprising 32 confreres and houses and works in Macao, Heung Shan and Shiu Chow. As new missions in Japan and Siam were being accepted or considered, the *Sino-Japanese Province* was erected on 28 May 1926. In December of that same year Fr. Pietro Ricaldone set out on a year-long extraordinary visitation of the Asian Missions. By the time the visitation ended in late 1927, there was a Salesian regional presence and a well established juridical structure in East Asia: the China Province, with houses in China, Hong Kong, Macao, Shanghai, Timor, and a mission in Heung Shan; the Vicariate Apostolic of Shiu Chow; and the two missions of Miyazaki in Japan and Ratburi in Siam, soon to be erected as both Prefectures Apostolic and Salesian Visitatore. This brief paper intends to outline the juridical configuration and development strategies of the Salesian work in China and study the internal and external conditions that influenced its first expansion, in the years 1926-1927, in East Asia.[1]

1. The juridical configuration of the Salesian work in China 1906-1926

The protracted negotiations to start a Salesian presence in China began in January 1890 and ended in December 1905, practically at the vigil of the departure of the 1st group of Salesians, and went through three distinct phases. The initial approach (January 1890 - June 1892) consisted in an exchange of letters between former Macao missionary

* Fr. Carlo Socol is professor of Church History at the Holy Spirit Seminary of the Diocese of Hong Kong.

[1] Chief archival sources are from Archivio Salesiano Centrale in Rome (ASC) and the Archives of the China Province in Hong Kong (AIC).

Francesco Saverio Rondina SJ and Fr. Arturo Conelli, approved by Fr. Michele Rua, and designed to solicit an invitation from local authorities. The initiative in phase two (April 1899 - November 1900) was taken by the Bishop of Macao through the Nuncio in Portugal. A 3rd and final phase (November 1902 - December 1905) initiated by the Provincial of the Portuguese Province, Fr. Pietro Cogliolo, successfully concluded the negotiations.[2] The first group of six missionaries, led by Don Luigi Versiglia, left Genoa on 17 January 1906 and arrived in Macao on 13 February to direct a small orphanage, the *Orfanato da Imaculada Conceiçao*, owned by the Bishop.

The Macao house was first attached to the Portuguese Province, as were new missions in India (Tanjore 1906, Meliapore 1908) and Mozambique (1907). Fr. Cogliolo had barely time to visit its most far-flung house (January - March 1910) when the Portuguese Revolution closed all houses in Portugal and forced the Salesians to leave Macao and take refuge in Hong Kong (November 1910). When activity resumed in May 1911 in the *Heung Shan mission*, under the Portuguese Padroado but in Chinese territory, and again in Macao in September 1912, this *"China Mission"* came under the Turin base, recently established Subalpina Province. It stayed with the Subalpina even when the newly entrusted mission of *Leng Nam Tou* (North Kwangtung) became the Vicariate Apostolic of Shiu Chow in 1920. All along the China Mission had but one Superior, Don (later Msgr.) Luigi Versiglia.

The anomalous "canonical situation of the confreres in China and other missions", seemingly that of having a Vicariate Apostolic 'belonging' to a Province, was discussed at length in the Superior Chapter on 30 December 1921 at the approaching of the 12th General Chapter: it was decided to seek the opinion of other religious Congregations that were in a similar situation.[3] In October 1922 the Superior Chapter approved a *modus vivendi* between the Religious Superior (Provincial) and the Ecclesiastical Superior (Vicar Apostolic) and decided that where there was no Province, a Visitor would be appointed, with powers delegated by the Rector Major, according to art. 83 of the Constitutions. It was under this arrangement that a Visitatoria of China, comprising Macao and the Heung Shan Mission, was set up in 1923 under a reli-

[2] C. SOCOL, *The first twenty years of the Orfanato of Macao between ideal and reality (1906-1926)*, in F. MOTTO (Ed.), *Insediamenti e iniziative salesiane dopo Don Bosco.* Rome 1996, pp. 275-325.

[3] *Verbali delle Riunioni Capitolari*, ASC D 872, p. 80.

gious superior or Visitatore, as distinguished from the Vicariate Apostolic of Shiu Chow, under the responsibility of a Vicar Apostolic.[4] As we shall see, the move created a *duality* in authority, which was to cause a lot of friction between the two.[5] In the Vicariate, in whatever concerned pastoral work missionaries obeyed the Vicar Apostolic, while for religious discipline they obeyed the Religious Superior.

Having accepted the Japan mission in 1923, on 15 December 1925 the Superior Chapter discussed and unanimously approved the motion to apply from the Holy See for the erection of the Chinese Province, which would also comprise Japan.[6] On 28 May 1926, in the wake of a general reorganization of the Provinces worldwide, the Sino-Japanese Province was erected, with Fr. Ignazio Canazei, who since 1923 had been Visitor, appointed as its first Provincial. On paper the province comprised 14 "houses": besides Macao, Shanghai (1924) and the three houses erected in Japan (1925), also the Heung Shan (3) and Shiu Chow (6) 'houses' were counted, even though they had not been canonically erected, being mere mission stations often with only one or two resident missionaries.[7] Fittingly, yet problematically in view of the distance, the rectors of Shanghai and Miyazaki were appointed Provincial Councillors alongside the existing ones, i.e. the rectors of Macao and Shiu Chow. In early 1927, the house in East Timor would be added and, later in the year, that of Hong Kong. By 1927, the number of confreres and novices had reached 107.[8] On 1 August 1927, Fr. Pietro Ricaldone, Extraordinary Visitor, hived off to Japan and established the Japan and Siam (Thai) Missions, both of

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[4] The Chronicle of the China Province gives 1 January 1923 as the birthday of the Visitatoria. No document (Minutes of General Chapter, or Letter of Appointment, or Decree) has been found so far attesting the required juridical act or erection. The news was announced by Msgr. L. Versiglia, returning from the 1922 General Chapter, as he reached Macao on 10 March 1923. *Cronaca. Orfanato da Imaculada Conceição*, p. 156. The letter of appointment reached Fr. I. Canazei included in a letter of Fr. C. Gusmano, secretary of the Superior Council, dated 30 July 1923. AIC, *Nomine I.*

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 149-150. Also *Atti del Capitolo Superiore* 1923, n. 22, pp. 158 and 170.

[6] *Verbali*, ASC D 872, pp. 207-208, 337 and 363.

[7] Copy of erection document in ASC D518 and AIC, *Ispettoria Cinese I*, 1925-1929. On the question of canonical erection of single houses see *Atti* 1928, n. 43, pp. 668-669; Canazei to Gusmano 7.7.1928 and P. Cossu's reply 16.8.1928, ASC F 156.

[8] On 1 January 1923 the number of confreres in the Visitatoria was 32. Between 1923 and 1926 a total of 92 confreres and novices were added, 87 from abroad (20 priests, 13 *coadjutors*, 14 clerics and 34 novices and six pre-novices) and five locals (all novice coadjutors), with a net increase of 75. Data from *General Progressive Catalogue of Salesians of China and of China Province from 1906 to 1955.*

which became Visitatore. The China Province became known as "Ispettoria della China di Maria Ausiliatrice". On this occasion Fr. Canazei asked the confreres to help him come up with a typically Chinese name for the Society, which as from 1 January 1928 shed its old name.[9]

2. Development strategies of Salesian work in China 1906-1926

When deciding to go to Macao, the Salesians took as good the advice that starting in a foreign dependent territory was a prudent strategy in view of the frequent revolutions that rocked China. The enormous bloodshed and destruction caused by the Boxers uprising in 1900 was on everyone's mind. The Diocese of Macao did not come under Propaganda Fide, but was under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the *Portuguese Padroado*, as were the Heung Shan and Timor missions. This had certain financial advantages, as missionaries received a salary, but posed many constraints and did not allow for free development "Salesian style".[10]

The *Shiu Chow Vicariate Apostolic*, erected in 1920, was under the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide, to which a request for an independent Vicariate had been formally submitted in 1916.[11]

The *St. Joseph Institute* in Shanghai (1924), instead, was owned by a Committee of laymen under the leadership of a prominent Catholic, Mr. Lo Pa Hong. The relationship between Mr. Lo and the Salesians was regulated by a convention, which, mainly due to Lo's tendency to interfere in day-to-day affairs, was insufficient to safeguard the autonomy the Salesians had been guaranteed, thus causing considerable strain and bringing the relationship to breaking point. The contract was rescinded in October 1929. In September 1931, the Salesians again started providing spiritual assistance in the Institute. New arrangements were reached in 1940, after Mr. Lo's tragic death on 30 December 1937, giving the Salesians a free hand in the school.[12]

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[9] *Verbali*, ASC D 873, p. 55; ASC F 160, Circolari 18.6.1926; AIC, *Ispettoria Cinese I*, 1925-1939.

[10] *Relazione Visita Ricaldone*, p. 20, ASC F 158.

[11] Decree of erection of the Shiu Chow Vicariate in *Atti*, n. 1, 1920, pp. 19-21.

[12] Copy of the 1922 contract in AIC, *Shanghai 1919-1930*. Contract of 1940 in ASC F 726, b. 6; Haouisee to Braga and Braga to Ricaldone, 29.9.1940 in AIC, *Shanghai 1940-1941*.

St. Louis Industrial School in Hong Kong was set up on more secure bases: while the land on which the school stood remained property of the Hong Kong Catholic Mission, the Salesians had a free hand in running it and in developing strategies. The only conditions were that the Salesians maintain 20 orphans introduced by the Vicar Apostolic and - this being a condition imposed by the government upon granting a larger piece of land on lease - that they invest HKD50,000 within the first three years. The arrangement suited both the Salesians, who sought a pied-à-terre in the colony to start a formation house, and the Catholic Mission, which lacked qualified personnel to run and develop the school.[13]

Fr. Pietro Ricaldone, on his visit to the region, took a dim view of working under the *Padroado* and resolutely steered Salesian work away from its jurisdiction: Tanjore, Miliapore, Timor and the Heung Shan houses were closed one after the other.[14] The Macao Orphanage, however, was retained. The Salesians had since 1912 renegotiated the contract with the Bishop and, while they were still "salaried administrators" - the institute and the property still belonging to the diocese - they had won sufficient independence to develop autonomously: the institute turned out to be a useful showcase and an effective "base" for Salesian work in the region.[15]

One can perhaps see a lack of planning in all this: actually, it was the old strategy of getting a firm foothold, and then gradually develop according to circumstances.

3. Regional expansion of Salesian work in East Asia

In late 1917, the Missions Etrangeres de Paris (MEP) were ready to cede the *Leng Nam Tou* territory in Northern Kwangtung to the Salesian Congregation. Shortly thereafter, Propaganda Fide asked the Salesians to take over part of the Vicariate Apostolic of Nagasaki (the

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[13] Copy of "Convenzione" of 8 September 1927 and correspondence in AIC, *S. Luigi (St. Louis School) Hong Kong.*

[14] For India see Ricaldone to Rinaldi 22.02.1927 in ASC F 177; for Timor see *Verbali*, ASC D 873, p. 131 and Ricaldone to Canazei 29.12.1920 in ASC F 156; for Heung Shan see Canazei to Ricaldone 19.12.1927 and Ricaldone to Canazei 26.1.1928 in ASC F 156; Ricaldone's views on Padroado Missions in *Visita Ricaldone*, pp. 17-20.

[15] SOCOL, *First twenty years...*, pp. 311, 325.

Oita and Miyazaki Prefectures, July 1923) in Japan and part of the Vicariate Apostolic of Bangkok (the Thai Peninsula, later Ratburi Prefecture Apostolic, March 1924 and June 1925), both MEP Missions. As Fr. Ricaldone pointed out, the two missions had been "imposed' on the Salesians by the Holy See.[16] Earlier, in July 1922, Msgr. JB De Guebriant MEP, the former Vicar Apostolic of Canton turned Superior General, had approached the Superiors in Turin, offering the Salesians Hainan Island on condition that it be assigned to the French Salesian Province. The offer was declined, ostensibly for lack of personnel, but also because Salesian missions were never assigned to one single nation.[17]

3.1. *The Devolution of the MEPs, between internal crisis and strategic revision*

The reason given by the MEPs for the cession of Hainan Island to the Salesians was that the new Vicar Apostolic of West Kwangtung & Hainan, Msgr. Auguste Gauthier MEP, lacked personnel to evangelize this island the size of Switzerland. The Hainan mission, they said, would easily create "a whole" with the other Salesian presences of Macao and Shiu Chow. Lack of personnel, or the size of the territory were often cited as reasons for hiving off new missions to the Salesians and, indeed, to other congregations as well. The MEPs had started planning the division of the Vicariate Apostolic of Canton at least from as early as 1914.[18] Fr. Joseph A. Pinaffo, in his *Cenni storici sulla Missione del Siam in generale e del Vicariato Apostolico di Tajaburi in particolare (1500-1943)*, a study based on reliable sources, including MEP reports, writes of a "critical period of the [MEP] Bangkok mission in the years 1916-18". Already in the reports for the years 1900-1916, one can see a regress in the number of adult baptisms, especially when compared with the constant growth experienced in the previous 40-50 years, a situation "common to all territories evangelized by the French missionaries", which Fr. Pinaffo attributes to the fact that the mission was entrusted to the exclusive care of one Institute or Religious Order, and made worse by the drafting into the army and return to France of the Vicar Apostolic and 14 other missionaries.

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[16] *Visita Ricaldone, ibid.*

[17] *Verbali*, ASC D 872, p. 119.

[18] M. TEIXEIRA, *A Igreja em Cantão*. Macau 1996, p. 90.

The French missionaries could no longer effectively work on the double front of seeking conversions and guaranteeing the necessary instruction to the neophytes, as they faced fierce competition by Buddhists, especially in the education field.[19] These were doubtlessly true reasons. Similar reasons were cited for the cession of the Vicariate Apostolic of Shiu Chow. But there were other important motives, too. A new era of conversions was dawning, especially in China. True to their constitutional mandate of relinquishing local churches once implanted and in response to the appeals of the Apostolic Letter *Maximum Illud* (1919) to favour the local clergy, the MEPs had decided that it was time to open up their traditional missions to new forces, i.e. other Religious Orders and the local clergy. In 1926, Msgr. De Guebriant, former Vicar Apostolic of Canton, Apostolic Visitor of the China missions (1919-1920), and Superior General of the MEPs since March 1921, published a step-by-step plan for the hand over of MEP mission lands to the indigenous clergy.[20]

3.2. *The Chinese political crisis and its weight on the options of the Congregation*

The expansion of the Salesian congregation in the region was, therefore, fired by new developments in China, the needs and strategies of older missionary institutes, the will of the Holy See and, of course, by her own charismatic urge of making Don Bosco's dreams come true. However, practical choices were very much dictated or influenced by the contingent situations in China, especially the internal wars and their consequences on civilian life and missionary enterprise, the revolutionary fervour to change the old mentality and inefficient ways, and the desire to get free from the fetters of the unequal treaties imposed on it in the course of the 19th century. Fr. Domingos Leong told us what consequences civil war, factional struggle and new school legislation brought to the various Salesian presences in China.[21] Perhaps we should

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[19] ASC A 9060101.

[20] Circular letter of Msgr. De Guebriant dated 15.03.1926 in "Bulletin des missions", LX (1926), pp. 392-397.

[21] Domingos LEONG., *The political situation in China in 1920-30 & its effects on Salesians*, paper delivered at the Hong Kong Seminar, 4-6 December 2004.

also be reminded of another endemic threat, that of inland piracy and banditry, with which the missions had to contend all the time.

Fr. Ricaldone found the situation very frustrating: it was not easy to plan ahead. This explains the decision to secure footholds in safe places like Macao, Shanghai and Hong Kong, and develop works there such as schools, the house of formation and a house to recruit and train local vocations, always with an eye to serving the Chinese people, both those seeking refuge in those territories and those who lived in the interior. The shifting of personnel and the opening of new works, such as in the case of the Shanghai, Timor and Hong Kong houses, was very much subject to the changing circumstances of a country struggling to find internal equilibrium and cohesion.

3.3. *Development choices in tension between central strategies and local needs*

In his learned talk, Fr. Francesco Motto highlighted certain differences of perception regarding mission work between the Superiors in Turin and the Salesians working in the field. In the 1920s and '30s the China missions had become a veritable workshop in evolution where new ideas, strategies and priorities were discussed and implemented. The Holy See, represented by the Apostolic Delegate Archbishop Celso Costantini, played a significant role in this.[22] Fr. Canazei was a particularly keen observer and gradually grew into a convinced supporter of this evolution: unsurprisingly, his convictions about such issues as the indigenization of the church were not and could not be perceived with equal clarity or felt with the same degree of urgency by the Superiors, the natural keepers of Don Bosco's genuine spirit and method, back home.

The culture and language barriers a missionary met in China meant that his inculturation process had to be long and strenuous: young clerics, for instance, who had barely learnt the rudiments of the spoken language, and even veteran missionaries, could not be employed as

[22] Francesco MOTTO, *Salesian missionary activity while Blessed Philip Rinaldi (1921-1931) was Rector Major with particular reference to East Asia*, paper delivered at the Hong Kong Seminar, 4-6 December 2004; G. BUTTURINI G., *Le Missioni Cattoliche in Cina tra le due Guerre Mondiali*. Bologna 1998, pp. 35ff.

teachers in the classroom in a country where teachers were held in high esteem and had to undergo long and rigorous language training.

When in 1923, Turin began implementing the new strategy of sending young postulants to the missions, Fr. Canazei willingly accepted. But when Fr. Rinaldi began explaining the need of implementing Don Bosco's methodology in full *("impiantare nella Cina il sistema di D. Bosco: facendo colà quello che facciamo qua!")*, the same Canazei, taught by experience, explained how this plan could not be applied in China. He reminded the Superiors that it was a mistake to expect of "pagan China" what had been achieved in Europe or America, and kept insisting that, given China's peculiar situation, alternative ways had to be adopted: he declined to receive any more novices and asked that clerics be sent as practical trainees, instead.[23]

4. The visit of Fr. Ricaldone in China (1927)

The Asian Missions were new ventures for the Congregation, were expanding rapidly and, while other parts of the world had been visited by Extraordinary Visitors sent by the Rector Major, no Superior from Turin had ever visited Asia. Visitors were sent: (1) to insure unity of direction and intent, (2) strengthen the bonds of fraternal love and solidarity to make all Salesians one family, and (3) to get a better idea of the specific problems of each region.[24] An extraordinary visit had been announced by Fr. Rinaldi as early as in mid 1924.[25] The Rector Major especially assigned Fr. Pietro Ricaldone, the Prefect General, who was also the Councillor in charge of missions, as Extraordinary Visitor to Asia, precisely to respond to the specific needs of the Asian missions, which "on account of the variety of races and for other reasons [were] very different from the Missions in the West".[26] The Superiors, in fact, had been made aware of a number of specific issues that needed better understanding and more informed handling.

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[23] Correspondence in ASC F 156 and especially Canazei to Rinaldi 18.11.1925; echoes of the challenges foreign missionaries met in teaching in Callisto CARAVARIO, *Lettere*, ed. Ferreira A. da Silva. Roma 1998, p. 83.

[24]. *Atti* 1926, n. 37, p. 526.

[25] Canazei to Rinaldi 12.12.1924 in ASC F 156.

[26] *Atti* 1926, n. 37, p. 527.

4.1. *Reality*

The Visitor was impressed above all by the *excessive size* of the province, which made it "impossible to take care of regions so distant, with so diverse interests and conditions", and hence proposed to hive off Japan and Siam, appointing Don V. Cimatti and Don G. Pasotti, respectively, to head the two missions. It was not just a proposal: it was a decision, which he announced and implemented right away.[27]

The *political situation*, too, could not but impress him. Had Fr. Ricaldone visited China during a more peaceful period, he might have been able to fully appreciate her millenarian culture. Instead he happened to be there right in the middle of a chaotic civil war.

> "China is in utter chaos... The [obvious] painful consideration is that in the present situation missionary work is very difficult and unfortunately nobody knows when this state of affairs will end. Together with banditry and bolshevism the wind of nationalism has entered the country. China is an enormous giant waking up, stirring herself, wishing to equip herself in order to occupy a place it believes it belongs to her in the field of progress and civilization".[28]

None of the places where the Salesians were working, except perhaps Macao, remained unshaken by the revolution. Southern China was the cradle of revolutionary ideas and even Shiu Chow had been sucked in by the tornado: as a matter of fact, the Visitor observed, it was "one of the centres of the Bolshevik and revolutionary movement". This state of affairs not only made missionary work all the more complicated. It also demanded that missionaries "exercise greater prudence, refrain from meddling in political issues, always show the host land in good light and seek souls alone".[29]

Emergencies were the order of the day, and that of Shanghai, as we shall see, was particularly dramatic. Unsurprisingly, the Visitor had to use considerable time and effort to solve them. Notwithstanding the "dreadful crisis", he found dedicated and self-sacrificing confreres everywhere. The Shiu Chow missionaries, men and women alike, had all remained at their posts unlike protestant missionaries, thus winning the

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[27] *Visita Ricaldone*, p. 60.
[28] *Ibid.*, pp. 61-62.
[29] *Ibid.*, p. 61.

respect of the population. He found the Salesian spirit good and the Vicariate better developed than might have appeared from the regular reports, or the occasional complaints, received in Turin. Many buildings had been put up, but Salesian work as such had been neglected: the Don Bosco and St. Joseph Institutes belonged to the Vicariate. They could, and should, one day be transferred to the Congregation.[30]

This last issue was but one of a host of problems that could be lumped under the heading of relationship between the Ecclesiastical Authority, invested in the Vicar Apostolic, and the Religious Authority, exercised by the Salesian Provincial, and that is too ample to deal with in this short report: coordination of the two roles, concerted strategies, handling of personnel, division of goods, finances, even the spiritual care of the sisters, etc. all were sources of friction and misunderstandings, which were made worse by an "uncommunicative" Bishop Versiglia and an "unyielding" Fr. Canazei, and which the Visitor was unable to dissipate entirely.

In the Shiu Chow Vicariate, where mission stations could typically be 50kms apart, Versiglia had multiplied missionary residences for a more capillary pastoral action, assuming that Turin would continue to send mature personnel. The Superiors, instead, favoured fewer, better-manned centres; they had also begun to send novices instead of priests to the missions, leaving several confreres isolated. Fr. Ricaldone's promise to sent 12 priests in the next five-six years left Versiglia "relieved, yet skeptical".[31]

4.2. *Goals achieved*

Division and restructuring of the Province: Fr. Ricaldone got a clear picture of the staggering difficulties caused by distances and of the challenges China alone posed. Hence, he decided that it was better to set the two other missions on their own path at this stage. He equally became convinced that it was not in the Congregation's best interests to continue working in Heung Shan and East Timor under the *Padroado*, and thus set the stage for withdrawing from these two missions. The Macao Orphanage got a boost: "Much remains to be done to give the

[30] *Ibid.*, pp. 29-36.
[31] *Ibid.*, pp. 32-34.

[Macao] workshops the standard organization we require, both regarding general culture [the academic part], and professional training and [technical] drawing".[32]

He envisioned *Shanghai as a second hub* of Salesian expansion in China, notwithstanding the turmoil it was caught in. As the nationalist troops entered the city in late March 1927, the Salesians and the boys had made a dramatic escape, taking refuge in the foreign concessions with the help of Italian diplomats and marines. The school building was turned into a military hospital, leaving only part of the third floor for the students who returned there. It was a situation fraught with physical and moral danger:

> "It is impossible to tell how long this state of affairs will last. However, we are convinced, and with us quite a few among the most authoritative Jesuits, that we should remain in Shanghai, notwithstanding the adverse situation... We have to remain in Shanghai and wait for things to settle, because a bright future lies ahead for us here".[33]

He decided to leave Fr. S. Garelli, and Fr. E. Fontana, with 40 boys to weather the storm. Fr. Fontana eventually managed to secure permission from the Bishop to open a school in the International Concession, on condition that the Salesians ditch Lo Pa Hong, who was on the verge of bankruptcy, thus paving the way for the establishment of the Don Bosco Institute (1932). Talks were held with Bishop Simon Tsu of Haimen, one of six Chinese bishops consecrated by Pius XI in 1926, to open at least two schools in his newly established Vicariate.[34]

A Hong Kong Presence. The withdrawal of all except two confreres from Shanghai made it possible to finally accept the St. Lewis Industrial School in Hong Kong and to reinforce Macao and the Shiu Chow Vicariate. Personnel, machinery and even some pupils were redistributed: Fr. V. Bernardini and three others moved to St. Lewis and cleric Callisto Caravario, returning from Timor, was assigned to Shiu Chow.

The Novitiate. Canazei had asked for a moratorium on the sending of novices from Europe. The province lacked a house for them, teachers and money. Several found to be deficient or in poor health, had to be sent home at considerable cost. Besides, instructing the novices in

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[32] *Ibid.*, p. 7.
[33] *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.
[34] Ricaldone to Rinaldi 13.7.1927 ASC F 158.

Italian meant foregoing the chance of giving locals a truly "Chinese" formation. The Visitor admitted that certain aspects of the plan needed improvement: more careful selection in Turin, better personnel in China, a proper house, teaching aids, adequate programmes, timetable and diet. Yet he insisted on the soundness of Turin's strategy.[35]

He reported to Rinaldi that having properly explained the mind and strategy of the Superiors, in the end, "all convened" on the necessity of sending young novices from Europe to form, in conjunction with the still sparse local candidates, a congruous group of young trainees that would mature together and help each other in a mutually conducive atmosphere: the Europeans in learning the language and the culture, the locals in gradually absorbing the "genuine spirit of Don Bosco" from their peers formed near the Centre of the Congregation. The Provincial Councillors were convinced of this and, in the last meeting before the Visitor's departure, they discussed ways and means of establishing the house of formation. Unfortunately, these views were shared neither by the Provincial nor by the Vicar Apostolic. Having reached a consensus on the necessity of a house of formation, Canazei entered the following in his Chronicle: "Rev. Fr. Ricaldone intends to speak about a house of formation above all for young novices to be sent from Italy; Fr. Provincial is against such a project, too difficult to implement, and intends to speak of a house of formation mainly for locals".[36]

In the end, Fr. Ricaldone, as we know, decided to send not only Fr. Pasotti, the Master of Novices, but all the novices as well and other confreres too (21 in all) to Thailand. The reason he gave in his report to the Rector Major for such a move was that since the novitiate had moved to Macao, it was no longer possible to continue "on account of the [lack of] premises and the impossibility to enforce [the canonically required] separation or to introduce improvements". And hence, "for the good of "*quei cari figliuoli*", he decided it would be moved to Bang Nok Khuek, where they would find a house and a suitable environment. Of course Canazei thought the move unnecessary. The novices were admitted to their profession by the Chinese Provincial Council on 12 October, four days before their departure for Thailand.[37] Their profession later required a "sanatio", and caused further argument between Turin and Macao,

[35] *Ibid.*, pp. 61-62.
[36] *Ibid.*, pp. 62-63. *Cronaca Ispettoriale* (AIC), p. 46.
[37] *Visita Ricaldone*, p. 66; Cronaca Ispettoriale, pp. 44-45.

since Bang Nok Khuek had not been erected as a novitiate. The decision for this drastic removal and transplant had been taken at a Provincial Council meeting chaired by Fr. Ricaldone on 30 July and announced to the confreres the following day. As of 1 August, the Japan mission *effectively* ceased to belong to the China Province while the Thai mission eventually started as an independent work from day one, with the first batch of personnel transferred from the China Province.[38]

4.3. *Unsolved questions*

Many of the differences over how the Congregation and the Vicariate would relate to each other remained unsolved. An *Instructio* issued by Propaganda Fide on 8 December 1929, and dealing with the same problems, came out in favour of the Vicariates,[39] thus causing further misunderstandings and tensions especially when Canazei succeeded Versiglia as the Shiu Chow Vicar Apostolic in 1930.[40] Turin stopped sending young novices to China until 1933, thus stunting growth within the province for many years to come. The Congregation was overstretched and a moratorium on new houses remained in place from 1929-1932.[41] The resolution of starting a House of Formation was finally implemented when the Shaukiwan plot was bought on Hong Kong Island in 1931, but the house had to go through difficult years before it could become a well established institution where young Salesians, both local and foreign, could be suitably formed.

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[38] The birthday of the two Visitatore is 12 Dec 1927, when the Superior Chapter "stabilisce che [...] le case del Giappone formino una visitatoria con Visitatore D. Cimatti Vincenzo; e che le case del Siam formino una visitatoria con Visitatore D. Pasotti Gaetano, il quale fu eletto anche Direttore di Bangnok Khuek". *Verbali*, p. 55, ASC D 873. A request to hive off the two missions, submitted by Fr. Canazei and his Council on 24 January 1928, can only be seen as a formality. Copy in AIC, *Thailandia*.

[39] *Instructio ad Vicarios Praefectosque Apostolicos et ad Superiores Institutorum, quibus a S. Sede Missiones concreditae sunt,* in AAS 22 (1930) 111-115.

[40] *Elementi giuridici per determinare i rapporti tra il Vicariato Apostolico o il Prefetto Apostolico e i Religiosi esenti esistenti nel Vicariato Apostolico o nella Prefettura Apostolica*, ASC A 8300158, and Canazei's observations of July 1930, *Osservazioni intorno al regolamento missionario approvato ad experimentum nel Capitolo Generale XIII, fatte in base della Instructio emanate dalla Congregatio de Propaganda Fide addì 8 Dicembre 1919*, in ASC A 8300157.

[41] *Atti* 1928, n. 46, p. 693.

Conclusions

By the time Fr. Ricaldone left Hong Kong and returned to Turin via Siam and India, one could speak of a Salesian regional presence in East Asia. Japan and Thailand were incipient missions and soon would be turned into Prefectures Apostolic. China had an established Vicariate Apostolic and houses in the main foreign enclaves of Macao, Hong Kong and - a foothold at least - in Shanghai. Fr. Ricaldone envisaged a bright future. He also became aware of the enormous masses of people that inhabited those lands, and on board the ship that took him back to Europe, he conceived the idea of launching a *Crusade for Asia*, much as Don Bosco had done for the Americas.[42]

He had gained valuable first hand knowledge of the situation and the challenges the Congregation faced in the East. As far as China was concerned, he had sought to speak to a number of experienced Church people on selected topics, but without having the time, or the opportunity, or the mindset to fully grasp the important evolution that evangelization in China was going through, i.e. the gradual turning of missions into local Churches. Priority was fidelity to Don Bosco and hence the need to bring the China Province in line with the thinking in Turin. He therefore recommended that Canazei, even though "a truly exemplary religious" and "a man of non ordinary qualities", be changed when his six-year term as Provincial expired.[43] New strategies, favouring the development of schools, were implemented by Fr. Carlo Braga, Provincial from 1930 to 1952.

[42] Ricaldone a Rinaldi, 00.11.1927 "Salviamo i nostri fratelli" in ASC A 9050111.
[43] *Visita Ricaldone*, pp. 70-71.

THE BEGINNING AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SALESIAN WORK IN JAPAN

*Gaetano Compri SDB**

To write this paper, I used a great part of the materials gathered by the deceased Fr. Alfonso Crevacore in the "Cimatti Museum" of Tokyo (CMT), situated in the Salesian Seminary of Chofu. It deals specially with the mail correspondence. The originals are found according to the container, or in the Vatican Archives, or in the Central Salesian Archives of Rome (ASC) or in the archive of the China Province in Hong Kong or in the said Cimatti Museum. Fr. Mario Rassiga's manuscript "Breve cenno storico dell'opera salesiana in Cina" (vol. II, chapter XCIX, pp. 125-136),[1] which reported the correspondence between the Holy See and the Superiors in Turin before the foundation of the Salesian work in Japan. One should note that the actual Japanese Province, up to 1 January 1928, was part of the Visitatoria of China, of which the superior was Fr. Ignazio Canazei.

1. The Negotiations for the Salesian Work in Japan

The request of the Holy See for the opening of a Salesian mission in Japan, dates back in the beginning of February 1923. This results from the first existing document, a letter of Msgr. Marchetti of Propaganda Fide of 19 July 1923 to Fr. Rua:

> "The P.V.Rve.ma in the past month of February welcomed favorably the invitation of this Congregation to assume the evangelization of a part of the territory of the diocese of Nagasaki in Japan".

At that time, the whole Island of Kyushuat the south of Japan was part of the Diocese of Nagasaki, entrusted to the Foreign Missions of Paris with Bishop Msgr. Claudio Combaz. The Holy See having decided to divide the missionary work among the various missionary congregations: Franciscans, Jesuits, Salesians, etc. For this, it has proposed to the

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* Fr. Gaetano Cimatti is a Salesian historian and actual director of the Cimatti Museum of Tokyo. He is postulator for the beatification of the Venerable Vincenzo Cimatti.

[1] *Breve cenno storico dell'opera salesiana in Cina*, vol. I, II. Hong Kong, Aberdeen Technical School, 1973.

Salesians the two civil prefectures of Oita and Miyazaki, situated in the South towards the Pacific Ocean. There were three missionary residences, Miyazaki, Oita and Nakatsu, with a million and a half inhabitants and a total of 300 Christians. Economically, they were the poorest of Japan. In the same letter, one could note:

> "Allow me to remind you P.V., also in view of the intellectual and civil development that is verified in Japan, that it is convenient that the Missionaries be doted not only of common qualities, but also that they may be at the level of administering colleges and institutes of education".

On 27 July 1923, Fr. Rinaldi answered the Propaganda Fide:

> "The Salesians, God-willing, are prepared to go to work in Japan in the autumn of 1925.... We shall procure that the personnel may be able to correspond to the expectations of the Holy See.... We shall begin to send there at least six priests and the same number of catechists".

From Turin, the Superiors communicated their decision to Fr. Canazei, who immediately contacted the Bishop of Nagazaki, who in turn, on 19 November 1923, explained in this manner the situation in the two provinces:

> "As you know, the conversions are more difficult in Japan rather than in China. Experience will reveal the obstacles which we have to overcome".

Cardinal Van Rossum, later, on 31 January 1924, wrote to Fr. Rinaldi:

> "This Sacred Congregation would willingly see that in the current year 1924, any Father could already go to the new Mission in order to get acquainted of the places and of things, and in agreement with the apostolic Delegate, to prepare the necessary things for the arrival of the other first missionaries".

The Apostolic Delegate then was Msgr. Mario Giardini, who followed all the practices, and later became a great benefactor and friend of Fr. Cimatti and the Salesian Mission.

To satisfy this wish of the Propaganda Fide, on 1 July 1924, the Visitatore Fr. Canazei went to Tokyo, and from there, accompanied by the Apostolic Delegate Msgr. Giardini, went to Nagazaki to meet Msgr. Combaz. It was on this occasion that it was discussed to entrust to the Salesians the two prefectures of Miyazaki and Kumamoto, instead of Miyazaki and Oita. At Kumamoto, in fact, there were more possibilities of evangelization, more missionary works and a great number of Chris-

tians. This was the wish and the proposal of the Superior General of the Foreign Missions of Paris, Msgr. De Guebriant, who wanted to be more generous to the Salesians. However, this proposal vanished immediately. Contrary opinions came from the missionaries of religious congregations of the place. The S. Congregation of the Propaganda Fide, on 4 October 1924, communicated to Msgr. Giardini that the prefectures entrusted to the Salesians remained definitively those of Miyazaki and Oita, and these he communicated to Fr. Canazei.

After having made the visit, Fr. Canazei, in his report to the Superior of Turin, of which in Hong Kong, there existed only a rough copy, notes among others:

> "The terrain is above all sterile and difficult. But the Lord will help us to evangelise it.... I note that the life in Japan is very expensive. Nay, they say that it may be the most expensive country in the world.... The country, for how many similarities with the Chinese civilization it may have, nonetheless is very diverse. In general, the people are more educated; there reign order and discipline and a scrupulous cleanliness. Kyushu is relatively more backward. Miyazaki, especially, is a poor country".[2]

After this first visit, Fr. Canazei returned to Japan on 26 February 1925. From Shanghai, he reached Nagazaki, and then for the first time, went until Oita and Miyazaki for a direct look of the place. He could then personally see the poverty and the financial straits of the three residences. The Superiors of Turin decided to send six priests and three coadjutors in November of that year, and this was communicated to the Bishop of Nagasaki, who on 19 October 1925, answered Fr. Canazei:

> "I do not question the decisions of the Major Superiors of your Society. Perhaps, however, they do not have a true idea of actual Japan. In many ecclesiastical centers, there is full of admiration for the material civilization of this country. They should not allow themselves to imagine that results would be beautiful and easy. When your missionaries will arrive in Japan, they will find themselves in front of the nude reality; the scales will not delay to fall off from their eyes. They are to fear disappointments and discouragements. Everyone will say to the world: it is not that which they have told us, that which they have made us think.
> You have seen the residence of Miyazaki. In my opinion, it will be difficult to put therein nine persons... Life is so expensive here as in San Francisco and Paris".[3]

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[2] *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 129.
[3] *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 130.

2. Choice, Departure and Travel of the Missionaries

While the Visitatore Fr. Canazei prepared the terrain for the missionaries, the Superiors of Turin were thinking on who to send in the first expedition.

On 9 November 1923, in the same year in which Fr. Rinaldi received from Rome the proposal of a new foundation in Japan, he received a letter from Fr. Vincenzo Cimatti with this request:

> "Please pray for me and so that I may find a place in the Mission that is *most poor, tiring and abandoned.* What else do you want! I do not feel at ease with (even if they may be relative), etc. I do not see myself. Oh that you may listen to a good plea".

Fr. Cimatti was then the rector of the house of Valsalice and principal of the Teachers' Training School of the same house. Mamma Rosa died the preceding year; his brother Luigi was missionary in Peru; and his sister Santina, now Blessed, was a sister of the Hospitallers of Mercy with the name of Sr. Rafaella.

Most probably, his request, renewed several times, inspired Fr. Rinaldi the choice to make him leader of the missionary expedition. Fr. Cimatti was a known personality not only for music (he received his diploma as master of the choir at the Regio Conservatory of Parma) and for the scholastic books of pedagogy and agriculture that he had written (he finished the doctorate of both disciplines at the University of Turin). But he was also an exemplary Salesian, an able professor and formator of young Salesians, who esteemed and loved him as a father. His was the first study on the Preventive System with the title "Don Bosco Educator", published in 1925 by the SEI. In the 28 years that he lived at Valsalice, with an intermezzo at the Oratory of San Luigi near the church of St. John Evangelist, several generations of Salesians and of missionaries passed through his hands. Msgr. Versiglia was his assistant in the novitiate, and Fr. Caravario, who frequented the Oratory of St. Joseph united during the war with the Oratory of St. Luigi, was directed by him towards the Salesian life.

Sensing that he was chosen for Japan, he wrote in the beginning of June 1925 to his former student, Fr. Braga who was in China:

> "Dearest Braga, I shall send you the book "Don Bosco Educator". I shall be happy to hear your evaluation of it. Courage, always, because Jesus wishes you well. Lavora ut bonus miles ... Remember, however, that he who works is Jesus, and only Jesus; it is always Jesus through Mary.

My letters will get lost, at any rate, but believe me, you are remembered always, specially in prayers and when we meet each other with the past pupils of Saint Luigi. I never supposed that they wished us well those poor little ones. Beautiful souls your friends, as it is seen in the photographs.
Have no fear and always go forward, projecting beams of light.
Who knows, we might see each other. Everybody mentions my name for the Orient, but I do not know anything.... I wait. A good thing if it is my time now. Jesus will listen to me; if not, we shall continue to educate for the good of humanity.
Be cheerful and good. My life is as usual: I would not know how to make it different. A doubt assails me once in a while. That in the missions there can be forced idleness. It would be my ruin...! But when I think of my Don Carlos, what idleness! But who are we in comparison with you? There is reason to blush. At any rate, pray for me, and Jesus in your masses may make us yours".

After having received the announcement of his nomination, he wrote on 15 October 1925 to his past pupil, Fr. Giuseppe Grigoletto, who then was one of his greatest benefactors:

"Dearest Bepi, this night, *media nocte*, I end my office. I begin a new course of thoughts, aspirations... the Rising Sun, the cherry blossom, the chrysanthemum, the loquat, the persimmon, the rice, the mosquitoes, the volcanoes, the earthquakes... As you see, a complete arsenal of natural history in action. I cry and I rejoice! ...Pray for me. You know how I need it, especially now: everything has an eastern orientation and there will be to laugh at, but also to suffer much in all senses. Deo gratias!".

They began the preparations, and in November there was the farewell ceremony in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians, where Fr. Cimatti met for the first time his companions of the mission. They were almost all unknown to him. This is the list of the nine destined for Japan:

Fr. Cimatti Vincenzo, 46 years, Italian from house of Valsalice;
Fr. Tanguy Jean, 45 years, French, from Spain;
Fr. Cavoli Antonio, 37 years, Italian, from the house of Perugia;
Fr. Liviabella Leone, 30 years, Italian, from the house of Rome;
Fr. Margiaria Angelo, 27 years, Italian, from the house of Alexandria of Egypt;
Fr. Piacenza Pietro, 26 years, Italian, from the house of Lanzo;
Coad. De Mattia Giovanni, 37 years, Italian, from the house of Faenza;
Coad. Guaschino Luigi, 32 years, Italian, from the house of Aosta;
Coad. Merlino Alfonso, 24 years, Italian, from the house of Martinetto Turin.

It was the 50th foundation of the Salesian missions, and the new mission of Japan was the commemorative act. Pope Pius XI, in the audience conceded to them, reminded them of this:

> "You leave in the light of the 50th anniversary of the first expedition to Argentina and Patagonia. We wish that equal success to this first expedition to Japan. You go like the Apostles sent by Jesus Christ. May you have the same dispositions of heart and may you work for the spread of the Kingdom of God in the souls entrusted to you".

Before departing, Fr. Rinaldi celebrated mass for them in the room of Don Bosco, and left them this remembrance:

> "You go to a far but very materially developed nation, which does not need you. That which you must bring there is Jesus ... et hunc crucifixum!".[4]

On 29 December 1925, they left Genoa on the boat "Fulda" of a German company. Together with another group directed for China, there were 27 Salesians, among whom were Mario Acquistapace, Innocente Alberti, Antonio de Amicis, Vincenzo Ardissone, Pietro Battezzati, Carlo Casetta, Carlo Frigo, Ercole Tieri and others.

They were going to an unknown country, but full of hope. We report here some passages of letters which Fr. Cimatti wrote during the trip, revealing clearly his missionary spirit:

2 January 1926 - to Fr. Rinaldi:

> "I try to offer to Jesus (the only things I can do in my pride, I who believe knows everything) the voluntary sacrifice of myself; of the forces that He gave me; of the good will that everyday He grants me with royal generosity. I procure to always render more resolute the detachments of this departure, in order that I may be able to love Him more and the souls that He would want to confide me in his goodness. Please pray that Jesus may accept this as my total sacrifice, which must on one hand assure the salvation of my soul, and on the other, to lovingly bend it as to open its heart to the humble souls of the Japanese, to move them to the action of grace".

21 January - to Fr. Rinaldi:

> "For the observance of the vows and the rules, I tried to give good example to all. Nothing special. Certainly, I have to restrain my pride and sensitive-

[4] Angelo MARGIARIA, *Rampe di lancio e fiori di ciliego*. Roma, Libreria Editrice Salesian, 1967, p. 26.

ness. And also for this that I asked to go the missions. I was loving the confreres and the clerics too much and specially my poor *normalisti* of Valsalice! But, O Jesus, what can I do if you have given me such a heart? Oh, that it may be all yours! I do not hide them that the thought of so many holy souls and of many would need continues pushes to be good Salesians moves me so as to fill me the eyes of tears! I was loving them too much! Oh, that Jesus may accept my most miserable sacrifice for their better formation, which Fr. Cimatti did not know how to give".

28 January - to Fr. Rinaldi:

"As I inform you that our beloved Fr. Canazei, who was on his return from his visit of Siam, awaited us in Singapore. One can imagine the comfort of everyone. He accompanied us, partly in carriages, and partly in car to the Catholic Portuguese Mission, making us visit the principal Catholic Churches and to taste the refinement of Christian charity.
Having made the necessary provisions, we returned on board. As usual I found myself in that state of inexpressible nausea and discomfort in seeing the proud fierceness of the dominators... In this, I recognize better my proud character. Physical tiredness, perhaps, nausea of myself, of all those miseries which always draw those natives further away from God. Because they see the material well-being of the others, they let themselves be influenced and they allow themselves to be seized... Enough, enough!
As I write, the Fulda passes in front of the island of Sanciano. Oh, how many memories! St. Francis Xavier! I seem to see his person smiling, to greet those protected by another St. Francis and to wish for their missions abundant heavenly graces. *Faxit Deus*!
Tomorrow, in recollection and in prayer, we shall remember our dearly deceased confreres, as we remembered in these days the Chinese confrere coadjutor and the young who died in a sea disaster of Shanghai, which surely you have been told".

2 February 1926 - to Fr. Rinaldi:

"We shall arrive in Shanghai this 3 February. Here is a brief report of the trip from Hong Kong to Shanghai.
The visit of our dear confreres from Macao, the visit of the Superior of the good missionaries of St. Calogero of Milan (PIME), the paternal hospitality granted to our various confreres during the night, the fantastic view of the illuminated city seen from the sea (it is an enormous mountain of light) – all these made a strange contrast with the sight of the Chinese at the port of Hong Kong, who threaten strikes and reprisals against the English. Think of it, some had to proceed to Shanghai in order to disembark in China (among these, some Protestant pastors), and the more we felt the dolorous nearing of separating from confreres and novices who had to go to Macao. At 7.30 a.m., of 30 January, between the commotions of all, we bade each other

farewell. While the majority goes to Hong Kong, I wandered with Fr. Piacenza in the fields, between the rocks, at the seashore, between the poor quarter of the Chinese, in order to distract me, to find in the beautiful sun and in the works of the good God and among his poor friends, comfort, instruction, calm.

At midday, while we praise Mary with the Angelus, we leave. It is the day consecrated to prayers for deceased confreres; we most cordially unite for common prayers. Eternal peace grant to our brothers, O Lord!...

On 3 February, at 7 a.m., we disembarked at Shanghai, welcomed by Fr. Garelli and by the son of Lo. We were brought by car to our institute, where, with the music of the band and amidst the applause of the students we embrace our dear confreres. We forget everything: fatigue, boredom, and everything of that special state in which one remains after a long trip.

We are among our brothers, in a Salesian house. We can greet Jesus in the chapel and see again the smiling face of our Help of Christians. A Chinese artisan reads a welcome address in Italian. I answer in Italian, while Fr. Garelli translates. And in order to celebrate our arrival, he declares vacation to the joy of everyone.

During the light refreshment and lunch, we extol the Superiors, our Congregation, the union between Shanghai and Japan. I go with Fr. Tanguy to the missions procure of the Jesuit fathers to speak of our mission. The plan to leave for Nagasaki remains modified, because the Japanese steamboats leave late. Besides, it is not convenient to leave. Thus, we return to the original plan: everyone leaves for Moji, and then we shall see.

In the evening, visit to the Hospice of Lo, long conversation with Fr. Garelli. He has difficulties with regards his health (always the stomachaches). Lo will not help him to finish the Institute, so beautiful and so grandiose. He had to suffer for the health of the confreres (for now, they are alright, thanks to God; it remains to be a preoccupation); for the lack of personnel in which he finds himself; and greatly for the recent disaster, which till now he could not explain nor understand why.

The next day, 4 February, I celebrated mass in the chapel of the Hospice of Lo, who served with great pomposity, and who after breakfast, wanted to accompany me around. The Cottolengo in small version is here reproduced. Thanks be to God! It is a pity, the religious assistance is still very reduced: only one priest, old, for 1,300 patients; few sisters. And unfortunately, with the usual questions between the regular and the secular clergy, for the usual rights, much of the good which should be done to souls is paralysed. Also for this, Fr. Garelli, has and will have many crosses. Et inimici hominis domestici eius...

This evening, Mr. Lo-pa-hong wants us to dine in his house. During the toast, I remembered you and everyone. Chinese dinner! Better our polenta than all these stories even if offered with the best charity of the world!

They made me play music, and I played varied music amidst the admiration of all (I do not know why!). At the exit, Lo-pa-Hong gave me the first donation of a check of $600. Deo gratias! He is the first Chinese benefactor. Tomorrow, before departing, I shall write you a beautiful letter".

4 February 1926 - to the clerics of Valsalice:

"At this time, I had to go around Shanghai, specially on the Chinese sector, where our house is. The international grant and the French are like European cities. The Chinese sector is a human swarm of work and activity, in which adjacent to the wealth and well-being, there is the greatest of poverty, dirt, human degradation. Near sumptuous palaces and stores furnished with every good thing from God, there were sprawling areas, where numerous families live in true and proper filth. They are preparing for the Chinese New year (14 February) with food of every kind, especially poultry, pigs' meat (one can see cows too) and vegetables.
How many millions of abandoned souls! Oh, if you see the multitude of the young and the children of Shanghai!... The oratories and the youth institutions are rarely known. Of two or perhaps three million inhabitants, only 15,000 Catholics. Pray, pray, pray".

On 5 February 1926, I wrote from Shanghai to the Apostolic Delegate Msgr. Mario Gilardini in Tokyo:

"Very reverend excellency, I pre-announce to you our approximate arrival at our Kyushu. Saturday, 6 a.m. on the Fulda, we leave from Shanghai. We shall disembark at Moji and all will proceed for Miyazaki according to the instructions we had from our Provincial Fr. Canazei.
When we shall have learned a little the language and after having clarified the situation, I shall divide the personnel in the residences.
Your visit is not only welcome, but necessary. And Fr. Canazei pleads vivaciously that you coordinate with him, so this visit may be effected with him.
The Salesians of Don Bosco are willingly set to work and fully trust in your advise and your prayers. And on my behalf, we implore your blessing.
That you may pray in a special way and may bless he who has the honor to profess himself your most devoted Fr. Vincenzo Cimatti Salesian missionary".

3. Arrival in Japan

Finally, on 8 February, they disembarked in the port of Moji in the island of Kyushu. In the evening, they left by train for Nagasaki to visit the Bishop, Msgr. Combaz, to whom they were to depend. They stayed there for a week, making precious acquaintances.

They arrived in Miyazaki on 17 February, welcomed by Fr. Bonnecaze of the Paris Foreign Missions Society. Here, they lived together with him for one year to learn the language and to ambient themselves. They had to adapt as much as they could at the second floor of the crowded residence. This was how Fr. Cimatti described their arrival:

19 February 1926 - to Fr. Rinaldi:

"Te Deum Laudamus! Deo Gratias! Is the shout which, with emotions, I threw to God, when we arrived finally at the place of our hopes, work, sacrifice. We are finally in Miyazaki. I have a lot of things to say to you: I will force myself to be complete and to proceed with order.
6 February. Greetings to the confreres of Shanghai and we proceed on our way.
8 February. At 8 a.m. we are in the big port of Moji. A thick fog prevents us from seeing the magnificent panorama which delineated itself once in a while, illuminated by the sun. It is a splendour, which when the fog vanishes, reveals itself to the ecstatic eye, easier to idealize rather than to express. Islands covered by thick forests dominated from afar by chains and mountain peaks, covered by snow, glowing by the rays of the sun. At our feet the ample gulf, outlining the industrial city of Moji, in its hundred of chimneys, in the magnificent scene of its houses along the slope of the mountains. Deo gratias! Long live Japan!
9 February. At 8.30 a.m., we are at Nagasaki, received festively by Fr. Thiry, Procurator of the Paris Foreign Missions Society. In a little while, we are at the Cathedral as guests of his excellency Msgr. Combaz, who after the mass, welcomes us affably. He gives me a paternal embrace, and manifests to us his gladness in having us to help him. After greeting him in your name and of the Superiors, and after the traditional ritual oath takings (Chinese ceremonies and modernism), he grants us all the faculties which are in his power (those which usually given by the Propaganda to the missionaries), and wishes that we stay with him until our baggages arrive at Miyazaki.
17 February. We arrived at Miyazaki at about 11 a.m. The pleasant Fr. Bonnecaze and a Christian were there waiting for us. At about 100 meters from the station, a group of children, instructed by the good Christian teacher who teaches them catechism and who wants to know us immediately, shout to us by the road «Banzai, banzai!» (Long live, long live) The first to greet us at the exit of the station are two fidgets who bow smiling. Oh! How Don Bosco must have wished that his first children of Japan should meet as first salute the elected portions of his heart and the heart of Jesus....
I arrived, as if day dreaming, at the mission. It is so magnificent, all Japanese. God has made us for this fall from paradise. At the exit of the Church, I sing the Te Deum with my companions. And we consecrate ourselves to Mary, who in Japan is honored with the title «Our Lady of Japan, Queen of Martyrs, Help of Christians». The Madonna of Don Bosco wishes to be honored in Japan also with this title. Deo gratias!...
What is lacking now is the most important instrument for action, the language. It seems true to us what St. Francis Xavier wrote in his letters: «In the midst of this people, we are but mute statues. They speak of us; they discuss about us, and we are without words.... At this point of time, we become like children, studying the elements of a language, and it is pleasing to God that we have the candor and the simplicity of children».
We are quartered to sleep and to study in the four rooms at the upper floor; it is a little bit crowded, but it is better than worse. At the ground floor, the

refectory, and the rest reserved to the Father Missionaries...
Everyone speaks of us and speaks to us:
1) of the enormous difficulty of the language,
2) of the more enormous difficulty of the apostolate.
Monsignor also spoke to me of the difficulty of ambientation. Also with sacrifice, I believe it opportune (with the understanding taken with the provincial) to be free with the food and to use a little wine in order not to render too abrupt the passage of regime. We shall see everything in the practice: I believe that for six months, there is no need of forming other communities....".

4. The First Difficulties to Adaptation and to the Language

From the letters of Fr. Cimatti, one could find a detailed description of the difficulties they encountered, because of the very difficult language, the humid climate, the political situation, the character of the Japanese people. Difficulties which went on until the Second World War. In one part, these were due to the not so good conditions of the health of a good part of them. Almost all have suffered because of the first world war, and Fr. Cimatti in his letters described his companions as "remnants of the war".

3 March 1926 - to Fr. Rinaldi:

"Regarding the confreres... Fr. Cavoli: good for the spiritual part. He has been the most harassed in health during the trip and is now in the period of acclimatization. Only now that I know that he has been very sick during the war (rheumatism with complications of the heart and of the head). Certainly, he is a little irritable, and some of his outbursts had been the reasons for small disagreements and displeasures with the others. I shall make him undergo some health cure (he requested for it). I pray that the Superiors should know about it first, because here, the treatments are dolorous. Fortunately, we now are in months of relative rest....
On the account of the situation of the health of the confreres in this first period of acclimatization, the following are the pieces of advice of Monsignor and Fr. Provincial. For this, I have adopted ad experimentum the following modus vivendi:
Food: I have dispensed them from fasting. Breakfast: coffee and milk and for those who wish some egg. Lunch, as in Italy. At 16 p.m., for he who wants, a little tea (a piece of bread or orange et similia). Dinner, as in Italy. Our good coadjutors cook Japanese food (rice, fish, and vegetables) in a European manner, slowly learning the customs of the country. I have requested for a little supply of wine (which has not yet arrived): a quarter for every meal. There is milk for the one who wants, who can drink it instead of the wine. Egg in abundance (for now). A good Christian bakes the bread".

The Visitatore, Fr. Canazei, came to visit us from 1 to 8 April 1926. He celebrated Easter with them and thus wrote his impressions:

> "The confreres are intensely busy in the study of the Japanese language. They live in the same house in Miyazaki. It is not yet seen clearly what would be and could be our program of activity and Salesian work. The Provincial accompanies the local Superior Fr. Cimatti to Oita and Nakatsu in order to see the future residences in these two cities. After having spoken with Msgr. Combaz, Bishop of Nagasaki, Fr. Provincial leaves (8 April) for Shanghai".

Fr. Cimatti, on 8 April 1926, wrote to Fr. Rinaldi:

> "My dear Father, thank you for your letter, which I immediately read to everyone as soon as it arrived from Oita-Nakatsu, where the Provincial Fr. Canazei (who paternally came to celebrate Easter with us) wanted me to give a first look. I return tired (or better, bored... never-ending rail tracks), but happy. Here is a quick report.
> The area which has been entrusted - if it pleases God - to the poor children of Don Bosco is immense. The provinces are in continuous increase of population.
> Miyazaki is proud to be the place of origin of the Imperial Dynasty.
> In Oita, there are remnants of the work of Sr. Francis Xavier. I hope that the Salesians will manage to find some old Christians in their apostolic trips.
> Nakatsu is a place where there are no instruction of any sort: there reigns Buddhism.
> The residences of Oita and Nakatsu are discrete; the one of Miyazaki is smaller; for now it is more than sufficient to live in".

They immediately began to study the language. As texts, they used the books of the elementary schools, the same used also by Christian children. There were 12 small volumes for the six years of the elementary, and they finished them in one year. Fr. Cimatti put into music 31 poems contained in these books, and on Sundays, he made the children sing them in order to communicate with them. As professor, they had a Japanese who understood a little French, assisted by a missionary. Evidently not all of them understood French. The difficulty can be understood from these passages of letters:

2 May 1926 - to Fr. Rinaldi:

> "Study and work: I give myself to these as much as I can, whether for duty, as well as for good example. My pumpkin (which you know for years) is always hard as usual, it is like the medlar, so difficult to mature. We are already at the third book: we can handle discretely the katakana writing,

used in the railways. We are now handling the Hiragana and with the letters used everywhere. In the evening, some conversation to understand the phraseology and the Japanese constructions (really terrible). At lunch and dinner we put out a letter to be studied, and with that character everyone must form a small phrase that is used publicly.
At the end of the month, I hope and I could already oblige the confreres to speak in the refectory in Japanese, at least for some time. We are all trying to sharpen as much as we can the arm... but, please believe me, it is so hard; nay, for the one who will come in the future, that he keeps this in mind. And with the children? Some phrase... but I shall speak of this later....
The festive oratory will certainly become daily, if we have the language.... We shall have a first difficulty with the Christians whose consciences we will have to direct to the way of the apostolate. You should see how jealous the children, and in a way the Christians, when they see us deal with the pagan children!... It is a task! Anyway, even in this, there is the need of making them understand and we hope well.... In short, if the enthusiasm or other does not prevail, or if the Lord does not wish to leave us in pious illusions, it seems that the harvests abound, notwithstanding the difficulties which are not light".

30 May 1926 - to Fr. Rinaldi:

"How do we manage with the language? We go slowly, but the progress is sure. It could not be otherwise, because (except for the pronunciation - which is already much) everything is a new super-construction. It would be good to make those who will come in the future remember this.
We have done something crazy. Listen!!!.... Either because we wanted to practice, or to win over our fear, or (we could not do otherwise) to honor the Blessed Mother in her month and feast, or to oblige her to come to our help during the novena, we gave a short sermon to the people (each one taking his turn), made, corrected, studied. They said that they understood and Deo gratias! In no shrine would have flourished such orators".

Admirable orators! The people said: "In Church they make us understand; but outside they are mute as fish".

Health problems began to appear immediately. Except for Fr. Cimatti, who knew how to adapt to everyone, everybody found himself in difficulty. Fr. Cavoli became a Salesian after having been a military chaplain; he was an excitable and imperious type, and felt very much the climate. Fr. Liviabella, once in a while, had light attacks of epilepsy. The coadjutor De Mattia little by little showed himself unbalanced and after two years had to return to Italy. Fr. Piacenza died young in 1935, and Fr. Tanguy returned to his country in 1938, as the two coadjutors returned later also.

Fr. Cimatti, in his manifestations with the Superiors, aside from his personal rendiconto, every month wrote the state of each confrere. For example:

29 July 1926 - to Fr. Rinaldi:

"Fr. Tanguy: had a light illness. He has some moments of homesickness of Spain, that makes him suffer. For the rest, good.
Fr. Piacenza: can not always sleep in the night. For the rest, good.
Fr. Cavoli: sleeps little, stomach disturbances – difficulty with the language. I encourage him. If he will not learn in one year, he will learn in two years. Irritable. Has some small outburst in relation with Fr. Liviabella. For the rest, good.
Fr. Margiaria: some stomach disturbance (constipation). For the rest, good. He will do well in the language. A little quick in judging.
Fr. Liviabella: he is a little better now. However, he need not work too much and to tire. For the rest, good. Still young and simple in judgement.
Coad. Guaschino: sleeps little in the night. Thus...he cannot study his books. It seems he is sufficiently and more abundantly busy. For the rest, good in everything.
Coad. Merlino: good. Suffers nostalgia on the thought of his mother. Little by little he is being formed. Has learned to cook well. For the rest, good in everything.
Coad. De Mattia: good in omnibus. He prepares for the next September (16) for the perpetual profession to which he was admitted. Has learned to cook well; a good sacristan, market-gardener, etc.".

2 September 1926 - to Fr. Rinaldi:

"With regards my soul, I thank the Lord: I believe that there are voluntary shortages. I grow everyday in the absolute conviction of my being nothing, manifested in the difficulties of the language, in the difficulties of understanding these characters, etc. Oh, how many reasons to be humble, with all my arrogance, with the titles, with the glories more or less of beautiful Valsalice, of St. Luigi, of music, etc. Oh, what contentment to see in the name of God, who, in the midst of these souls, in the unique possibility to stammer, with whatever appreciation on the part of these Japanese who believe that they are the only great ones in the world. Deo gratias!
I needed this shower of humiliation, which I foresee will grow and will leave me for now, by the grace of God, calm and cheerful".

4. The Missionary Work Begins

Finally, after a year of study of the language and of ambientation, our confreres took possession of the three residences of Miyazaki, Oita and Nakatsu. The rectors, Fr. Cimatti, Fr. Tanguy and Fr. Piacenza, were already named before the departure from Italy, and the three residences were already erected as religious houses by a year, when these were still in the hands of the Fathers of the Foreign Missions.

For every house, two priests and a coadjutor were assigned. Certainly one year study of the language was not sufficient. But their program of apostolate was very clear. The Bishop had died in the preceding autumn; the diocese was still vacant.

On 30 January 1927, Fr. Cimatti wrote to Fr. Rinaldi in these words:

"Now I can give you clearer news of our situation. Here is what has been agreed with the Vicar of the diocese. On the first of February, we enter officially Miyazaki; on 20 February Nakatsu; on 10 March Oita. Deo gratias! We realize our insufficiency. But on the other hand, if we do not throw ourselves in the water with this blessed language, we cannot swim. We shall do our best and where we do not reach, Mary Help and Don Bosco will do for us: nay, it is better that they do and will do everything, so that certainly everything will go well.

This is our program until the day of separation:

Two hours of school. I hope that by 20th of this month, we finish the 12-volume book, so that we finish the elementary. When we shall have in hand these 12 books (of which two were studied by memory), we shall already have material for the spoken and written language, that which a great part of the Japanese does not have. Almost all have already read the catechism and other books. The preparation for the Sunday sermons is already at hand. That which is lacking is the practice of the language which will surely be of help in these coming months. The priests already prepare themselves with great effort for the examinations of conscience and to have materials for the confessions. Fortunately, the Christians prepare themselves for these examinations. We shall say to them: «For now we understand this!» There is inside all the theology and still a little more.... And we go ahead in the Lord.

Please believe me, that it has been good for us to have utilized this time together with the reading of these books. Perhaps, we shall speak a little more, but we will not be able to read yet. But with the reading, one does more and one has in hand the key to work by oneself: and thus the way for the future is smoothened.

There is no need to deceive ourselves: to be alright, two years of intensive study are needed. Otherwise, one always goes shaky, and thus will never be

alright. The Japanese is difficult to speak and to write. It has absolutely no contact with our language (up to now only two words over a thousand I have found similar to Italian = *Pan* [bread, and it is not Japanese because they do not have]) and *tanto* (which has the same as our meaning for quantity). One would have to entrust to memory thousands of word, united in the strangest of constructions, which have a little of the Latin, and with indefinite slowness of expressions, which they consider emphatic....
I hope to begin soon, with a little more regularity, harmless publications on the Salesian Bulletin. The Japanese read and are well informed of everything. A European does not make one step that the police does not know. And everything with a manner that is so refined that it enchants. We go out little or almost never; but they even know what we eat. And if they ever understood Italian, they would have even known what we say.
Thus, of this noble land, either speak nothing or speak of good. If one deals with illustrations: they are such in which they make the most beautiful of figures. You see that I am already Japanizing! Oh if you listened to the homilies! But you do not know that there is not a Japanese composition in which they do not swoon at the lady moon, with the birds, with cherry blossom! In preaching about St. Francis and Don Bosco, as a good Japanese, I said that St. Francis was a small «samurai». I said: «Spring approaches - the plum tree flowers - your children are beautiful as flowers». Please do not laugh at it! I Japanize myself...".

And on 10 March 1927, he renders an account of the situation of the Christians:

"As you see, the Lord blesses us: pray, my father, for you know that with this recklessness at the head there is little to bite... but really at the head there is Jesus, Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco, and therefore...
What do we say to you about Oita? From the Father, of which it happens, one could know little or nothing, as for Nakatsu - therefore with the few data that there are, one will reconstruct and then one will see what is to be done. With the Parish Priest of Miyazaki some visit has been done to get acquainted with Christianity.
Many good, many unfortunately abandoned, many in true confusions (families in which the mother or the father is christian and the other pagan - or one or the other Christian and the children not baptized - or divorce ... or individuals which have begun and then...) The Lord help us! Here and there sheep in various places, sheep isolated in the midst of wolves, sheep abandoned - many sheep who have passed on to other pastures.
Why all this? Certainly many reasons; neither Fr. Cimatti know them all. Certainly the Fathers found themselves in great financial difficulty and ... of system: it seems to me that they do not move too much. Certainly there are no catechists also - when there are, there is the need to pay them dearly and then ... they serve only up to a certain point. There is the need therefore to form them ourselves: it is the first work.

First, that we can possess the language as theirs... then the foreigner is always a foreigner... then (it seems to me) the children have been put aside... In short, the heart cries in seeing this state of things... but it is so. That the good God may pardon me, for saying all these. In comparison with us, these fathers are giants of virtue, of untiring work. They have founded Christianity. However, the things are as I have said. They have left some houses; but all require great repairs, since for years they have been abandoned to themselves, they knew that they had to go away (and they did the same thing for the souls). They brought away the objects of personal property (they say thus). They left other things behind; but they demanded gracious recompense, which I gave (I ask forgiveness if I committed this mistake) inspiring me at the magnanimous heart of Don Bosco et pro bono pacis... On the other hand, I could not demand from the Superiors of Turin - the Provincial is far (for the responses) almost like Turin.
Program: the search for Christians - knowledge of the real situation of the missions in its various aspects (christian and pagan) - put ourselves salesianly at their disposition - care of children (finally in Miyazaki, a playground has been constructed where our naughty Christian children can run around; they are like our Italians when they play). Having done these well, we shall try the pagans. It is a delicate and difficult task.
In general, the Christians are very poor, dirty and poorly educated... The pagans are richer and well off, clean and apparently educated.
The Christians, in general, are looked down upon by the pagans. They (specially the elder Christians) still feel that sense of apprehension in which they have lived for centuries. They avoid the pagans. They prohibit their children to go with them, whom they call "*gentes*" (many Latin words have remained among the old Christians – «confessio», «contrition». etc.). On the other hand, they have learned from the pagans ostentatious, loose and dirty manners and words...".

Fr. Cimatti knew how to take advantage of every occasion to penetrate the pagan environment. He made friends with the local authorities, journalists, schools, participating in their feasts, organizing concert, inviting them to the feasts of the mission. He invited the journalists for lunch during the feast of Sr. Francis of Sales, explaining to them that he was protector of Catholic journalists. He even made to come to Miyazaki, the first to reach the North Pole, General Nobile, who came to Japan to bring a dirigible. For him, the whole city moved, which admired the faith of such a man. At the departure, he entrusted him the following letter for the Rector Major:

30 May 1927 - to Fr. Rinaldi:

"I entrust the present letter to Gen. Nobile who by person or by post will send it to you.
In his goodness and with his great effort, the illustrious and revered General

accepted the invitation and came to Miyazaki during the feast of Mary Help of Christians, of which he is an ardent devotee.
The Blessed Mother used him for the official presentation in Miyazaki. The Lord be thanked, and with the Lord, His Excellency, who wanted in this manner to honor and help the Sons of Don Bosco. Your Fr. Cimatti".

5. The extraordinary visit of Fr. Ricaldone

Fr. Pietro Ricaldone, Prefect General of the Society and in-charge of the missions, made an extraordinary visit to the new mission. He arrived on 7 June 1927, accompanied by Fr. Canazei, who came to Japan for the last time. He was accompanied by Fr. Cimatti to Tokyo in order to pay his respects to the Apostolic Delegate and the other ecclesiastical and civil authorities. Then they visited the three works in Nakatsu, Oita and Miyazaki. In this last residence, all the confreres gathered together for the spiritual exercises. From 21 to 28 June, Fr. Pietro Ricaldone left the missionaries 11 dense pages, reproduced in paper A4 and distributed to all. In these, he wrote:

"Fr. Pietro Ricaldone of the Society, in a series of conversations he had with all the priests of the Mission gathered at Miyazaki, traces the key principles that our new-began Mission must follow: (1) in the religious observance, (2) in the studies, (3) in the missionary life, (4) in the administration, in order to be and to conserve themselves sincerely Salesian".

We are impressed by the precision of the observations, which establish through example even the minimum particulars the entire schedule of the day.

The two Visitors departed on 30 June for China, where Fr. Ricaldone had an encounter with pirates. Of this visit, Fr. Cimatti wrote to Fr. Rinaldi:

10 July 1927

"Great benefits to souls came from this visit – firstly, to the souls of the confreres, then of the others. Deo gratias!...
Fr. Ricaldone was received by the Japanese authorities and in general by the Japanese, as an important personage — by the Salesians like a father. The newspapers spoke of him, and this was propaganda. I tried to make him see all that was necessary to see the real situation in the missions. I also made him meet the missionaries who work together with us. Conclusion: he is enthusiastic about Japan. This will be seen from his letters. Deo gratias!".

Fr. Canazie wrote in his notes: "By the decision of Fr. Ricaldone, Extraordinary Visitor, beginning from 1 August 1927, the mission of Japan, will be separated from the Province of China".

Fr. Ricaldone also wrote his observations to Turin:

18 June 1927

> "As I have written you, the Apostolic Delegate is of the opinion that the Prefecture Apostolic be established soon... Fr. Cimatti can do well, even while continuing as Salesian Superior.
> I believe it is useless, if not damaging, to let these houses of Japan continue to be part of China. I shall write later my impressions of Fr. Canazei; certainly he did not and will not do anything for these houses... I believe the moment has come to form this new Visitatoria: Fr. Cimatti can be Superior...".

The reasons for this decision were: the diversity of nations, with the differences of language and customs; the distance of the provincial house (Macau), in times when there were no airlines yet; the maturity of Fr. Cimatti whom the Superiors believe can be entrusted with this new assignment.

The date of erection of the Visitatoria for Fr. Canazei was 1 August 1927; but the nomination of Fr. Cimatti as Visitatore was dated from Turin 1 January 1928. It reached him only some months later. Moreover, the decree of canonical erection had the date 6 June 1929. It was for this that Fr. Cimatti continued to insist to the Superiors, that his superior was Fr. Canazei, to whom he continued to send letters. The latter, however, would send them back to him, telling him to send them himself to Turin.

The Visitatoria became a Province on 2 December 1937, and Fr. Cimatti became its first Provincial until 1 November 1949.

The Mission of Miyazaki-Oita was separated from the diocese of Nagasaki and became independent mission on 27 March 1928. Fr. Cimatti became its ecclesiastical superior. It was erected into a Prefecture Apostolic only in 1935. Fr. Cimatti became its first Prefect Apostolic until 1940, when the Japanese government, in an environment of extreme nationalism, gave order to all foreign superiors to resign. He was the first to resign, and for this he thanked the Lord.

6. The Formation of Personnel

The problem of personnel always bothered Fr. Cimatti for the development of the missions and of the province. Indeed, there was the need of missionaries from abroad; but the formation of local vocations was also urgent. He had spoken of this to Fr. Ricaldone, who had given him promises; but they were not immediately sustained. It is marvellous to note that when in 1928 the Salesian mission opened in Siam, it immediately began with 28 missionaries, while in Japan, there were only eight, one having gone back home. In 1929, there were 46 in Siam, and in Japan 11. Compared with other provinces of the East, the Province of Japan is that which has received less personnel.

After so much insistence, on 31 December 1928, three new missionaries arrived (but all three did not last long in Japan), and in January 1930, another 10 followed. Of these, some were 17 years old and have hardly finished the novitiate (five of these returned home after a few years). Years later, others aged 16 came to Japan to make the novitiate. To learn the language, it was thought opportune to send young personnel. Evidently, the problem of their formation was not an easy solved, since there was not the place and the personnel adapted. Because of this, one would understand the insistence of Fr. Cimatti to the Superiors of Turin that they send him the necessary personnel. We can read for example these passages of letters:

3 October 1927 — to Fr. Rinaldi:

> "Our work is becoming known slowly, but surely. In January, I hope to publish a pamphlet on Don Bosco (as propaganda) in Japanese, and perhaps begin a newsletter. Oh, how much good can be done with the press... And how much there is need of it! Beloved Fr. Rinaldi, help us. You await Fr. Ricaldone, who will make concrete proposals for the novitiate, etc. But remember that if in this year or in January you do not send two or three, we lose a year, always for the difficulty of the language. I ask only two or three for every year, as St. Francis Xavier. Please think truly of this.... Be convinced that for Japan, to gain a year is a big thing – to lose is an immense loss".

28 October 1927 — to Fr. Ricaldone:

> "Please permit me to insist on the question of personnel. You know in what conditions we find ourselves with the language. I already have two Christians in formation; and indeed they are promising (one is 50, and the other 30).

> And there is already the need of doubling for the religious service, at least monthly. Not sending even only two or three means a year lost. You are aware that in Japan we arrived 40 years after the first missionary expeditions, how long and rough has been the way. For this, please send by January at least some of those who have already been designated for Japan. I ask the same number that St. Francis Xavier asked (and I would like to have his holiness and courage to succeed as he succeeded to obtain it) – «send me three every year». Reflect, most beloved Fr. Ricaldone, and for the good which you demonstrated for Japan, come to the decision to content me at least in part. You can do it; you want it!
> On Cimatti's future... Oh, beloved Fr. Pietro, it is not for me, but it is for my soul and for the beloved Congregation that I speak, and for souls. May they leave me tranquil to work with the broom in hand, and in the liberty to move myself, not at the service of obsequious etiquette, but with the poor legs and arms God has given me. But what you wish is to harness a donkey with flowers and blooms? (This, I was reading, in fact, this morning on St. Francis of Sales). He is always a donkey. I have thought that I should not find myself after all in this worse situation... *ipse fecit nos et non ipsi nos*. I have the firm conviction that Don Bosco and Don Rua would have done so, as Fr. Cimatti does. May they leave this Romagnolo in the freedom of the sons of God".

This last paragraph revealed an aspect of the soul of Fr. Cimatti: he had an innate adversity for offices. One would understand that the voice of Fr. Ricaldone had arrived to his ears, who was proposing him as future Prefect Apostolic. He protested repeatedly to the Superiors. He feared not to be Salesian anymore. At the end, when, in 1935 the nomination came, he accepted it, as always, he was accustomed to do in front of obedience. But when his past-pupils of Valsalice sent the clothes and the signs of the office, he sent them back, saying to them to sell them and send the money instead for his poor.

Another point which he held so much at heart were the native vocations. It was his conviction that «Japan must be converted by the Japanese». Thus, from the beginning, he set his eyes on some young people who showed some hope of becoming Salesians. After several failed attempts, in 1930, he decided to open a minor seminary or aspirantate, adapting provisionally some rooms of the residence of Nakatsu, until 1993 when he could construct the Minor Seminary of Miyazaki, which became the seedbed of vocations of the Apostolic Prefecture and of the Congregation.

The clerics who arrived, having finished their study of philosophy and practical training, had to start theology. And the Superiors, notwithstanding the contrary opinion of Fr. Cimatti, obliged him to send

them to the Salesian Seminary of Hong Kong. But this attempt failed. Half of them returned to Italy. Only four were ordained priests. Since then, they frequented the Diocesan Seminary of Tokyo. However, account of the war, it was necessary to open the Salesian Theological Seminary in Tokyo.

The Salesian novitiate began in 1935 in Tokyo, and in 1936, there were already the first Japanese Salesians. In the same year, the first three foreign priests formed in Japan and in Hong Kong were ordained. In 1939, the first diocesan priest, fruit of the Minor Seminary of Miyazaki, was ordained. Unfortunately, during the Second World War, almost all the Japanese seminarians and confreres were called to arms and lost their lives.

There were actually about 100 Japanese Salesians; almost all of them became Salesians after the war.

7. The Apostolate of the Press

One other point to which the first missionaries gave great importance was the press. It was extraordinary to see how already in 1928, after having been in Japan for only two years, they have been capable of translating and printing the life of the Venerable Don Bosco and of Dominic Savio written by Don Bosco. This was followed by Don Bosco Blessed, and then by Don Bosco Saint. Moreover in the same year, 1928, they published a monthly newsletter of eight pages entitled "Don Bosco", which is the actual monthly magazine entitled "Vita Cattolica". Moreover, for some years, every 15 days, they published a leaflet of religious and moral arguments, to distribute to Christians and pagans. Where the missionary did not arrive, the press did.

And this was the beginning of the Salesian publication "Don Bosco" which did so much good for the Japanese Church.

In 1930, the "Unified Gospel" came out in the spoken language (Holy Scriptures was always in the literary language). Then came the series "Catholic Readings - Katorikku Kowashu" which had more than 100 small volumes. But with the war, it had to be interrupted for lack of paper. One cannot count how many books were printed by Don Bosco Press before and after the war.

In 1930, a printing school was established, annexed to the church of Oita. This was transferred in 1935 to Tokyo near the technical school

"Ikuei", so meritorious in this regard. With this, the Salesians of Japan continued the ideal of Don Bosco who wanted to be at the vanguard in this field.

8. 6,000 Letters to Superiors, Friends and Benefactors

Fr. Cimatti did everything to make known the mission. In his letters to the Superiors, it was usual that he attached articles for the Salesian Bulletin and the Gioventù Missionaria. His reports were much awaited. This encouraged his collaborators to do the same.

The financial necessity forced him also to do this. But his correspondence was not limited to the material aspect. It was full of faith and of spiritual teachings. For this, his past-pupils and friends were tied up with him. He gave counsels to sustain them in the faith. There were about 600 letters collected for his cause of beatification. Here are two examples:

19 October 1926 - to Fr. Carlo Braga:

"My Fr. Carlo, I wish to be among the first! Happy feastday! Which I do not foresee when this letter will arrive. To tell you that I remember you and that I will remember you is nothing... You know this.
Courage Don Carlo! Here is a commission for you from Him!
Don Carlo, I am happy for you! Continue, but with calm, sweetness, charity, not only towards the others, but also towards yourself, *corpo e anima!* - Did you understand?
Everything goes well here, even discussions using this ostrogothic language and writing. But «dan - dan, soro - soro, botsu – botsu» (in Japanese, it means «a little every time»), one proceeds. All well and cheerful, thanks to God.
Pray! I cannot offer you gifts; but only prayers for you and for your Chinese.... Long live Saint Carlo! Long live Fr. Braga! Long live Fr. Rector! Long live the Chinese Province! Long live all of us and... till we meet each other in Heaven. I bless you. Your Fr. V. Cimatti".

20 October 1926 - to the cleric Franco Amerio:

"My good Amerio, Thank you for your letter!
It seems to me that there is still not in you (at least reading in between the lines of your letter) that state of complete calmness, an indispensable condition in order to act on a fixed plan. Therefore: (1) You must stay

> tranquil where you are, because it is there where the Lord has put you. (2) Do everything that the Superiors tell you. (3) Frequent union with God with ejaculations, aspirations, etc. (4) In moments of pride, make yourself familiar with this ejaculation: "Jesus, for You!
> It is wrong to aim at the summit of perfection. (a) You cannot see it. (b) You cannot reach it, *oca* (excuse...! you know its meaning) that you are.
> I repeat: (a) the past is past, and water that has passed does not grind anymore; (b) the future...you do not know it: it is in the hands of God; (c) the present *moment* is yours: journey through it not watching neither up nor down; neither to the right nor to the left; *not looking* at the results (it is *obvious* that they are few or nothing); *not wanting them ascertained*, but acting in the present *moment* for *Him*, and with *Him*. It is the practice in order to be calm and to be pleasing to God; it is the asceticism of Don Bosco, who responds to the asceticism of St. Francis. But are you so *hard* not to understand the facility of this system? Therefore, actuate it with all your power".

But what will men say to you? *Mah!* They may say what they want. You do that which you must. And in moments of darkness, a little visit to Jesus, a breath of air from the tabernacle, a little music of five minutes, a little laughter, or a little rubbing of the hand or a little dance... and everything is finished".

9. The Music as Means of Apostolate

Finally, we mention one of the means of apostolate used by Fr. Cimatti was music. Aside from being a composer, he was a most able pianist and organist, with a beautiful baritone voice. Fr. Margiaria, then, was a good tenor, and Fr. Liviabella a good baritone. The three of them could do a concert. The first was performed, after only half a year of their arrival, for the 700 year anniversary of the death of St. Francis of Assisi, upon the request of the Franciscans of Kagoshima. After this, the requests were so many, that they performed about 2,000 concerts. In 1934, they performed even in Manchuria, in North and South Korea. During the intermissions, they would put some religious pieces in which the related explanations served as a homily. With this, they could also enter where it would have been impossible for the missionary to put his feet. Everything served to make known and to attract the sympathies towards the Catholic Church. This he learned from his first concert.

8 October 1926 — to Fr. Rinaldi:

"*17 September.* Great musical concert in piano, harmonium and chant at Kagoshima. The Franciscan Fathers, to whom that province was entrusted, asked me to bring our contribution to honor our great Italian Saint and to make a little Catholic propaganda.
I agreed willingly, and thanking the Lord, everything went beyond our and their very expectation. With the help of the good Franciscan Fathers, it was a great success (*fece furore*, we would say in Italian). With Fr. Margiaria and Fr. Liviabella, we presented a musical program almost entirely in Italian, alternated with French and English music, accompanied by the piano or by organ, with two repeats.
At 15 p.m., for the students of the colleges (over 500), and at 19 p.m. for the public (over 2,000 persons) in a big Japanese theatre. Deo gratias!
Singing hymns to Jesus, to Mary, to St. Francis of Assisi, to Don Bosco, to Italy... I thought of the Saint of poverty who was called «minstrel of God», then to Don Bosco who did not disdain to do acrobatic acts.
Strange beginnings of the missions for us Salesians in the design of Providence! Each piece is listened to with religious attention and crowned by applause at the end. And even before beginning the act, the executor bowed before the public.
Deo gratias! Deo gratias! Also this music will be a great means, because the Japanese people likes and appreciates European music, diametrically opposed to its own kind of music, which is full of sentiment and serene melancholy".

We have already mentioned the 31 songs composed from the books of the elementary schools. Of the musical compositions of Fr. Cimatti, about 400 are in Japanese. The first sang mass in the Japanese language was his. And it is dated 1940. And this, 25 years before Vatican Council II.

His greatest musical composition is the Grand Opera "Hosokawa Grazia" in three acts, on the libretto of the Jesuit Father Herman Heuvers. Performed for the first time in 1940 as lyrical theater, it was completed by him in 1959 when he was already 80 years, performed several times, of which the last time was in October 2004, in the Opera City Hall of Tokyo. There are 49 operettas, 18 sang masses, 83 Tantum ergos, etc.

All these materials, together with the letters, the collection of fossil, insects, shells, vegetables, photographs, and other historical relics are collected and ordered in the "Cimatti Musem" of Chofu, where there is the collection of the history of the Japanese Province. It is a sign of the untiring activity and dedication of the first missionaries for the Kingdom of God and for the salvation of souls.

Conclusion

On the occasion of the centenary of the Chinese Province, I wanted to emphasize the beginnings of the Japanese Province in its relations with China. After the separation, the relations between the two provinces did not weaken. The exchange of preachers for spiritual retreats, the collaboration in travels and in economics, the friendship between the confreres continued and still continue.

Speaking of Japan, the discourse is necessarily centered on Fr. Cimatti. He was the charismatic figure who managed to overcome and make others overcome the first difficulties, during and after the war. Even today, he is the example of the true Salesian. For this, he is called "the Don Bosco of Japan". His cause for beatification has been introduced; in 1991, he was declared Venerable.[5]

[5] The originals of the letters of Fr. Cimatti to the Major Superiors cited in the text are found in the Salesian Central Archive (ASC) in Rome. There also is found a copy of his correspondence with the Holy See. For the letters addressed to private persons, the originals (when these are available) or their copies are found in the Cimatti Museum (CMT) of Tokyo. The transcriptions of the letters of Fr. Cimatti by Fr. Alfonso Crevacore in chronological order and in the alphabetical order according to the recipients are found in the Cimatti Museum of Tokyo. Moreover, there is a copy of the transcriptions in chronological order at the Salesian Pontifical University of Rome, and those in alphabetical order according to recipients at the Salesian Central Archive. At the Historical Institute of the Salesian Pontifical University, the letters of Fr. Cimatti are being computerized for a future critical edition.

THE INITIUM OF THE SALESIAN PRESENCE IN THAILAND

*Enrico Danieli SDB**

1. Thailand at the arrival of the Salesians (1850–1945)

1.1. *Historical and social background*

Thailand: this land of the white elephant and the yellow robes and splendid Pagoda was known to the Western people as "The Kingdom of Siam", but the people living here always called themselves Thais. The Thais have a long history, going back many thousand years, but the present Thai Kingdom started nearly in 1260 at Sukhothai[1] in the North of Thailand.

In 1350, after they had pushed the Khmers out of the territory, they founded the second Capital at Ayuthaya, about 80 km upstream the Chao Phraya River.[2] Then the Thai Kingdom expanded from Laos to Malaysia and from Cambodia to East Burma and became powerful and rich, with 16 Principalities under its rule. But after 417 years the Burmese captured and destroyed Ayuthaya and the Kingdom of Siam in 1767. After only two years the great King Taaksin reorganized the Country and in 1782 the new capital Bangkok was founded. The present Dynasty started with the New Capital Bangkok. The present King Phumiphon[3] was born on the 5th of December 1927 the very year the Salesians arrived in Siam.

Meanwhile in 1810, Great Britain started to expand in Malaysia and then in Burma. Then France started to expand in Indochina and both became a threat to the Kingdom of Siam from the West and the East. The King Rama IV (1851 - 1868) started to open the Kingdom to the Western technologies. He was really scared of the two European powers at the western and eastern borders. Then the wise Kings Rama the V (1868 - 1910) and Rama VI (1911 - 1924) continued to modernize the Country.

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* Fr. Enrico Danieli is a Salesian missionary in Thailand. He resides at the Salesian Novitiate in Sampran, Thailand.

[1] The first Thai capital, one of the group that formed the Lanna Kingdom.

[2] The all Thai river that flows from the North to the Gulf of Siam.

[3] Rama IX, he is reigning since 1946.

The Kingdom did not fall prey of any Western Power. But the Kingdom still lost territories to Great Britain and to France.

After the First World War, Socialism was also spreading among the Thai people. In 1932, a group of socialist politicians obtained the Constitution from the King. But in 1934, because of the social instability a military Government took over. Later, it joined with Italy, Japan and Germany. In 1939, the Prime Minister Luang Phibun Songkhram became a Nationalist Dictator. He changed the name of the Country to Thailand and he took the Country to war against France in Indochina first (1941), to recapture the lost territories and then along with the Japanese against the Allies (1942 - 45). At the end the Country lost everything.

When the Government went to war against France, the Catholics were suspected to be related with the French and became target of distrust and limitations by fanatic groups. These groups waged a real persecution against the Catholics with the support of the Government (December 1940 - 1944).

1.2. *Religious background*

The Thais became Buddhist since 2,000 years. When they started the Thai Kingdom they shifted to the Small Vehicle of strict observance. Buddhist became a way of life for the Thais. The Pagodas has been the centre of the social life of every village and town. The Thai culture is a Buddhist culture.

Nowadays, the Thais are still 92% Buddhist. The Thais respect other Religions, but are jealous of their Buddhist culture and they do not convert easily. The Catholics are nearly 290,000 less than 0.5% of the population (62 m).

1.3. *The Catholic Mission in Thailand*

In the 16th Century, some Portuguese Missionaries from Goa and Malacca started to preach the Christian Religion in the Kingdom of Siam and opened some churches in Ayuthaya and Phuket Island. In 1660, the Missionaries of the newly established Society of the M.E.P., were given the Mission work in Indochina. In 1668, the Holy See also erected the Vicariate of Siam and entrusted it the Society of the M.E.P.

However, after a promising start, the French missionaries, suffered the first severe persecution, that brought many limitations to the missionary work for more than one century. In the year 1811, in the Vicariate of Siam there were only 3,000 Catholics. After this time the Missionaries started to work with the minorities: the Chinese, the Vietnamese and the Laotians: the Mission made better progress. In 1841, the Vicariate of Malacca (or of West Siam) was established.

Since 1850, the Catholics enjoyed a period of peace, freedom and growth all over the Country. In 1899, the new Vicariate of Laos was established in the North East of Siam. It was also in this period that the Missionaries dedicated themselves to the field of education and health care, which the Thais appreciated very much.

1.4. *Events leading to the Salesian presence*

The decisive factor that opened the way to other Congregations was the Encyclical Letter "Maximum illud" issued in 1919, which gave a new drive to the missionary work. At the same time in 1922 the M.E.P. had only 20 French Priests and 30 indigenous Priests to take care of the Vicariates of Bangkok and Laos which together had a population of about 30,000 Catholics. The Monfortian Brothers,[4] the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Paul de Chartres Sisters, the indigenous Nuns "Lovers of the Cross" and the Sisters of the Sacred Heart were precious collaborators for the schools, but there were no other Congregations of Priests to take part in the Pastoral Ministry.

The first Apostolic Delegate to visit the Kingdom of Siam in 1923 Msgr. Leocroart, suggested to Msgr. René Perros to study the possibility to divide the Vicariate. After a while, in order to comply with the new missionary drive of the Church, with great pastoral responsibility, Msgr. René Perros proposed to Propaganda Fide to divide the Vicariate in three parts: Bangkok, Chieng Mai and Ratchaburi.[5]

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[4] The Monfortian Brothers have now the most famous catholic schools in Thailand: the Assumption group. The association of the catholic schools is very compact and strong in Thailand.

[5] Fr. Robert Costet M.E.P. has been in Thailand since 1956. He is now in Ubon, North East Thailand. See: Histoire de la Mission, Siam and Laos by Fr. Robert Costet.

2. The arrival of the Salesians

2.1. *Contacts at the Congregation level*

In the years 1924-25, the Salesian Congregation was preparing to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Salesian missions and to this purpose some qualified confreres were giving talks on Salesian Missions, in parishes, schools, to cooperators and alumni to animate them about the missionary work and to get their support.

On the 25th of February 1924, Msgr. Dante Munerati, the Salesian Procurator in Rome, wrote a letter to inform the Superiors in Turin that he had received an unofficial note from His Excellency Cardinal Van Rossum, Prefect of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide, saying that he would like to entrust a new mission in the Kingdom of Siam to the Salesians. He also said that he got this idea while listening to a talk on the Salesian Mission [this talk was given by Fr. Anton Fasulo, a Member of the Superior Council], he added that he was really impressed.[6]

In March 1925, the Rector Major Fr. Philip Rinaldi informed Propaganda Fide, through the same Procurator, that the Salesians were available in principle to accept the new Mission, but they needed to have detailed information and also some time to prepare, since they were already committed to a mission in Japan and all the other Missions were asking for reinforcement.

To this, the Prefect of Propaganda Fide, Cardinal Guglielmo Van Rossoum on 10 June 1925 wrote to the Rector Major giving detailed information on the Kingdom of Siam and the new Mission. Propaganda Fide also was ready to allow a few years time to prepare.

One year after, on 10 June, Propaganda Fide wrote a second letter to the Rector Major to inform him that Msgr. G.B. De Guebriant, the Superior of the Mission Etrangères de Paris (M.E.P.) recently in Rome, had pressed PF for a quick solution to the practices to send new Missionaries to Siam.[7] He also suggested that, for the climate conditions, it was advisable to send them in October.

Propaganda Fide, according to the expectations of Msgr. De Guebriant, was asking the Rector Major for an answer about the possibi-

[6] This is the first document about the mission in Siam. It is not a document from PF. See Salesian archives document "Siam… 25.2.1924".

[7] This document was signed by the Card. Roussum Prefect of PF Prot. N 1894/2.

lity to send a group of Missionaries in Autumn. To this letter of Propaganda Fide, the Rector Major answered on 19 June recalling to the agreement in which PF had allowed a few years time to the Salesian Congregation, otherwise it had not been possible to accept the new Mission, because of the urgent commitment of the Congregation in other Missions.[8]

On 23 July, Msgr. Francis Marchetti in the name of H.E. Cardinal Van Rossum, wrote a letter to the Rector Major, accepting his reason for the delay, but asking to send some qualified and experienced priests to contact Msgr. René Perros in Bangkok and survey the new Mission to prepare a kind of agreement.[9]

2.2. *Contacts at local level: the survey of the Mission*

Fr. Ignatius Canazei: in January 1926, Fr. Ignatius Canazei, the Salesian Provincial of China came to Bangkok in the name of the Rector Major to get first hand information about the mission that the M.E.P. were ready to give to the Salesians in Siam.[10]

On 15 January, he completed a Report[11] on the Mission to send to the Rector Major. According to this report, the Mission that the M.E.P. intended to give to the Salesians consisted of five Monthons (or Principalities) in the Kingdom of Siam: Ratchaburi, Suratthani, Nakhon Sithammarat, Phuket and Pattani (the present 19 provinces West and South of Bangkok); and the Region of Tenasserim in Burma (East and South of Rangoon) with the towns of Tavoy, Mergui and Victoria. That is the long narrow peninsula along the Burmese border down to the Malaysian Border: nearly 1,500 km long. The most southern part of Siam and the Region in Burma formerly were part of the Vicariate of Singapore (or Malacca).

Fr. Ignatius Canazei, as a missionary with some experience, at once suggested to the Rector Major that the Region in Burma could have been a problem to the Salesians, for political reasons. It would have been better that the mission were only within the limits of the Kingdom of Siam,

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[8] Doc. 3. See Dettagli nella storia, archivio salesiano.

[9] This Document No 4. Prot. N2306/25. (See Sal. Arch): "...as wisely has been done in Japan...".

[10] He left Hongkong on the 13 December and arrived in Bangkok on 6 January. Then he left for Singapore on 17 January and arrived in Hongkong on 29 January. This from the Province Chronicle.

[11] See the report in the Salesian Archives.

as the M.E.P. were trying to do for themselves in Malaysia. He also suggested that to start it was necessary to send at least seven priests and a few lay brothers. It was not advisable to send clerics, as the Salesians had to stay with the French Fathers for a while.

He then drew maps of the mission and described how all the existing catholic communities in Thai territory (five larger and four very small) were all along the Mekhlong River[12] with Ratchaburi[13] as a central town. South of Ratchaburi there was absolutely nothing and he suggested that the mission be called the Mission of Ratchaburi; in due time the territory could be divided into two missions.

On 6 December 1926, the Mission Council of Vicariate of Bangkok approved the proposed contract and was signed by Msgr. René Perros and the Economer of the Mission Fr. Louis Chorin and sent to the Salesians in Turin through the Superior of Society of the M.E.P. in Paris.[14] Once again in February 1927, Propaganda Fide requested that the Salesians send the Missionaries as soon as possible.

2.3. *Fr. Peter Ricaldone's survey and decisions*

In 1927, Fr. Peter Ricaldone, the Prefect General of the Salesian Congregation (Vicar of the Rector Major), was visiting the Salesian Missions in India, China and Japan.

On 19 April 1927, he arrived in Bangkok with Msgr. Matthias to visit the new Mission in Siam. He intended to affiliate the Salesian community in Siam to the Province of India, but he soon changed his mind and he reached the conclusion that it was better to set up a Vice Province directly under the responsibility of the Rector Major.

On 28 April 1927, Fr. Peter Ricaldone sent his report to the Rector Major[15] giving some further suggestions: it was urgent to ask for a mission only in Thai territory. To start it was necessary to send about seven priests and a few coadjutors. It was advisable to send priests no more than 35 years old to be able to learn the language well; besides it is convenient that at least two of them know the Chinese language. Maybe somebody from China.

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[12] A river about 80 km west of Bangkok.

[13] A provincial town nearly 100 South West of Bangkok.

[14] See "Project de Contrat 6/12/1926. Sal archives S.D. 372.

[15] See report in the Sal. Archives. 28/4/1927.

He signed the contract: accepting the Mission of Ratchaburi in Thai territory; a mission with an area of nearly 118,000 sq. km with two million people and around 6,600 Catholics. He then promised to the Bishop of Bangkok Msgr. René Perros that the Salesians would arrive before the end of the year.

Since there were no health care facilities in the upcountry, he asked permission to open a house in Bangkok to facilitate contacts at all levels, but also to study the possibility to open technical school for the poor young workers. It should be noted that Fr. Ricaldone did not mention any Formation House.

On 3 May of the same year, Fr. Peter Ricaldone wrote another letter to the Rector Major from Saigon[16] telling him that he had made the decision to send some priests from China to Siam, also to prepare the place for an eventual evacuation of the Salesians from mainland China to Siam if things get too dangerous there.

On 6 July, the Rector Major wrote to Fr. Ricaldone telling him that he approved to send Fr. Pasotti to Siam, because the Novitiate in China would close.[17] Fr. Ricaldone discussed the matter with Fr. Canazei for many days until 30 July, they could reach an agreement. After the retreats in Macao on 31 July, Fr. Ricaldone announced that he had destined Fr. Gaetano Pasotti as Superior for the Mission of Siam. Fr. John Casetta, the Novices and some others would go with him.[18] Then, two priests, two students of Theology, four students of Philosophy, 12 novices and one lay brother: or a total of 22 confreres from the Province of China were assigned to the Mission of Siam.[19]

2.4. *The arrival of the Salesians.*

2.4.1. The first two Confreres in the Kingdom of Siam

On 16 August, Fr. John Casetta and the cleric Giorgio Bainotti sailed from Macao to Singapore and then traveled by train, they arrived in Bangkok on the 27th; they were welcomed with great enthusiasm by the

[16] See letter of Fr. Ricaldone to the Rector Major N7/VI…3/5/ 1927.
[17] Turin, Rinaldi to Ricaldone ASC – A 3790236.
[18] House Chronicle 31st of July 1927, signed Fr. Braga.
[19] As for the names see history of the Thai Mission: list of Salesians arrived in Siam.

French Fathers. The day after they arrived in Bangnokkhuek,[20] there were some buildings ready to accommodate the first Salesian Community. They had two months to prepare the place for the arrival of the official group. They got good cooperation from the Parish Priest Fr. Durand and the Catholic Community.

2.4.2. The official group

On 15 October, the official group sailed from Macao and they arrived in Bangkok on the 25th. The group was led by Fr. Peter Ricaldone himself. Fr. Gaetano Pasotti was the leader of the group.

At the Port of Bangkok, they received a warm welcome by the Bishop Msgr. René Perros, Fr. Emile Colombet and Fr. Louis Chorin. It was already three years they were waiting for the new Missionaries. Now their expectation had come true and they were so glad. The day after the group left by boat for Bangnokkhuek, they arrived at Bangnokkhuek after midnight: it was already the 27th of October. Here too the Parish Priest and the Catholic Community welcome them with big celebrations.

On 17 December, the complementary group arrived from Italy: four priests and two lay brothers. In four months the Salesians were already 28. On 11 December 1928, another group of 20 Salesians arrived, two priests, two Philosophy students and 16 novices, so that when the Salesians received the mission from the French Fathers M.E.P, on 1 January 1929, they were already 47, because one had died in August 1928.

In 1930, other 28 young Salesians arrived. In the period of only three years the Salesians were already 75, with only 11 priests. This massive arrival of young Salesian made a great impression among the religious working in the mission.

3. The Vicariate of Ratchaburi and the Thai Province

3.1. *The erection of the Vice Province*

The Salesian Community in Siam erected Vice-Province and Fr. Gaetano Pasotti first Rector of the Salesian Community and Vice-Provincial.

[20] A village about 30 km down the River Mekhlong from Ratchaburi.

As it has been mentioned earlier, Fr. Gaetano Pasotti had been named Superior of the Salesian Community in Siam since he was still in China. When Fr. Ricaldone arrived back in Turin on December 1927, he made a report to the Superior Council about his 12-month long visit to the Far East. On 12 December 1927, the Rector Major and his Council decided: "It is decided that the Houses in Siam form a new Vice Province apart from the Province of China and Fr. Gaetano Pasotti be named Vice Provincial;[21] he had already been named Rector of the House of Bangnokkhuek...".

Then Fr. Canazei, as instructed by Fr. Ricaldone, wrote a formal request to the Rector Major on 24 January 1928 to detach Siam from China.[22] It took more than seven months to receive the formal document.

On 28 August 1928, Fr. Pasotti received the official appointment as Acting Provincial in the name of the Superior in Turin (Visitatore). Little by little he prepared his pastoral plan with great courage and pastoral vision.

On 26 March 1929, after the Salesians had received the Mission, the Rector Major, Fr. Philip Rinaldi canonically erected Bangnokkhuek[23] as the first Salesian House in Siam. Later the Rector Major canonically erected at Bangnokkhuek the Formation House on 15 June 1932.[24] The first Rector was Fr. Emmanuel Almazan. Practically, however, this House was already working since 1929.

The first year for the Salesians was all wonder and learning: it was like a year of practical training under the guidance of the French Fathers and some good local people: they dedicated to learn the language, the culture, the history, to know the Catholic Communities and everything about the reality of the Country and to adjust themselves to the climate.

There were some joyful events: on 8 December 1927, the first group of novices made their first Profession here in the Kingdom of Siam. In January, they started at once the Course of Philosophy. On 2 June 1928, two students of Theology, received their Priestly Ordination, the first Salesians to have this Grace of God in the King of Siam. There were also some important visitors who came to know the newly arrived in so large a number.

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[21] ASC-D 873 *Verbali delle riunioni del Capitolari*, V, 3 gennaio 1927, 8 novembre 1935, p. 55 [5013-6].

[22] See 1928.01.24/Ca.

[23] According to the Document he had received from Rome N. 1519/29.

[24] According to the Document he received from Propaganda Fide N. 4534/31 dated in Rome 22nd of December 1931.

However, there happened also a very sorrowful event. On 6 August 1928, the young and qualified confrere Fr. De Nicola Vincenzi passed away. He was Doctor in Philosophy and had come especially to teach the young confreres. Due to this sudden death, Msgr. René Perros came personally for the funeral and being really concerned about the health of the Salesians, he kindly invited them to go for a month rest at Sriracha.[25]

3.2. *Important guests pay visit*

Remarkable was the visit of the Ambassador of France on 8 September, the last year the French missionaries celebrated the Nativity of Our Lady, the feast of the Church. In this occasion the Ambassador expressed his opinion regretting that the French missionaries had given the mission with all the institutions to the Italians. To this the French missionaries answered that the mission was not French, but of the Church, they were not giving it to the Italians, but to another group of workers in the Church: the Salesians had come to continue the work started by the Church many years ago. They also hoped that the Salesians could still do better with so many young missionaries.

Meanwhile, the civil authorities also wanted to meet the Salesians: on 9 January 1929, the Princes Nakhon Sawan and Dhanee Nivat, Minister of the Education came to pay a visit to the Salesians at Bangnokkhuek. On 9 March, the Governor of Makhlong also came with 600 scouts. The Italian Ambassador also came on 17 February. Lastly, but not the least, the Apostolic Delegate Msgr. Colombano Dreyer also paid a visit. All these visits gave encouragement to the new comers, while they were trying their best to adjust to the new situation.

3.3. *Missio Sui Juris, Prefecture and Vicariate. The Thai Province*

The Salesians had started to work in the mission field with full responsibility on 1 January 1929. On 30 June 1930, Pope Pius XI with a "Motu Proprio" Decree established the "Missio sui juris" of Ratchaburi entrusting it to the Salesian Congregation.[26] On 28 February, the Sacred

[25] A place on the sea coast some 120 km west of Bangkok.
[26] See Sal. Arch. Documents N. 6847.

Congregation of Propaganda Fide named Fr. Gaetano Pasotti Administrator of this Mission.[27]

The decree regarding the mission made special mention of the three Provinces[28] of Ratchaburi, Suratthani and Nakhon Sithammarat detached from the Vicariate of Bangkok and the two Provinces of Pattani and Phuket detached from the Vicariate of Malacca and thus erecting the new Mission "sui juris" of Ratchaburi.

On 28 May 1934, Propaganda Fide named Fr. Gaetano Pasotti as Apostolic Prefect of the Mission of Ratchaburi, which became Prefecture Apostolic.[29]

On 3 April 1941, since the French Fathers M.E.P. were expelled, because of the Indochina war, Pope Pius the XII with a special decree, erected the Prefecture Apostolic of Ratchaburi to the rank of Vicariate and Msgr. Gaetano Pasotti as Bishop of the Vicariate.[30] He was Consecrated Bishop on 24 June. For the same reasons, Msgr. Pasotti was named Apostolic Delegate for one year and special administrator of the Vicariate of Laos for five years.

3.4. *The erection of Thai Province*

Msgr. Gaetano Pasotti had been Superior both of the Mission and of the Salesians as Acting Provincial (Visitatore) until 1937. Everybody was working for the Mission of Ratchaburi and everything was the property of the Mission.

In 1937, there were already 84 confreres (they could have been many more if all stayed), with some 12 Thais. In May 1937, Fr. Candela came to Siam for the Extraordinary Visitation and the Thai Province was erected on 20 December 1937. Fr. John Casetta was named Provincial in January 1938.

In February 1939, the Superiors approved the distinction of property and administration between the Mission and the Thai Province. The Thai Province got only St. Joseph School in Banpong, the piece of land in Hua Hin and the house in Bangkok, because these places had been acquired

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[27] *Ibid.*, Decree N. 774/31.

[28] Meaning 3 Monthons or Principalities, according to the former administrative system.

[29] See Decree N. 2316 28 May 1934.

[30] See Decree Prot. N. 1838/41 Sal. Arch. S 273 Pasotti. See the topic "Persecution".

by the Salesians with funds from the Superior of Turin. Starting in 1939, the Salesians had to transfer the Provincial residence and the Formation House out of Bangnokkhuek to a new suitable place.

4. The first 20 years of Salesian work

4.1. *The formation of the personnel*

First task of the superior of the mission was the care for the formation of the young Salesian confreres, start the local seminary and look for other groups to work in different fields.

For the formation of the young Salesian confreres, Fr. Pasotti had capable cooperators in Fr. John Casetta, Fr. Emmanuel Almazan, Fr. Herrero and Fr. Silvio De Munari. Those who came in the first year had their post-novitiate and practical training rather informal. The house of formation was opened practically in 1930. The house of formation became a matter of concern and preoccupation for Fr. Pasotti and his collaborators for many years, because of the lack of formators and financial problems. He wrote a few letters to the Superiors about this matter.[31]

It is amazing to discover how many letters Fr. Gaetano Pasotti wrote to the Superiors and Propaganda Fide; how many reports about the situation of the Confreres and the work and also how many news to newspapers and Bulletins. All this was to keep in contact, ask permission and obtain financial support for the mission.

In 1932, Fr. Pasotti also erected the five larger churches as Salesian houses, so that the clerics could have their practical training there.

The Salesians who arrived as students, were ordained priests in batches: six in 1933; other six in 1936 and other two in Rome; other six in 1939 and nine in 1940. At the end of 1940, the Salesians priests were 34. They could have been many more.[32]

Before leaving for Italy in April 1929, Fr. Pasotti had already provided for the opening of the indigenous seminary for the mission , which was opened in 1930.

In 1931, two indigenous Priests of the Vicariate of Bangkok joined the Mission of Ratchaburi and later some seminarians joined the Salesians.

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[31] See Letters to the Superiors 27/2/1933; 19/11/1933; 10/1/1934 and many others.

[32] See remarks at the end of this report.

This however sparked a kind of discontent between the Salesians and the M.E.P.[33] On 14 November 1931, the first batch of six Salesian Sisters arrived in the Kingdom of Siam and went to stay in Bangnokkhuek too. Later, they fixed their centre in Banpong.

At the end of April 1936 the cloister nuns "The Capuchin Poor Clares" (O.C.C.) arrived to open their first convent in Banpong. All this was part of the pastoral plan of Msgr. Gaetano Pasotti.[34]

Since the FMA Sisters could not go and stay in mission stations and the Sisters Lovers of the Cross founded by the Society of the M.E.P. retired in the Vicariate of Bangkok, in 1937, Msgr. Pasotti founded a new Congregation of indigenous sisters: *The Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary* to help the pastoral work among girls in mission stations in a simple Thai way.

4.2. *The pastoral work*

In the initial agreement, the Salesians had to send about seven priests and a few coadjutors, but later, there was a change of plans and a large number of young confreres arrived to the new mission in Siam. In 1930, there were 11 Salesian priests for the pastoral work and the formation house.

In September 1928, after receiving the official nomination to Vice Provincial, Fr. Gaetano Pasotti proceeded to appoint the five priests who had to take charge of the different mission stations and he sent them to stay with the French Fathers to learn the situation. On 1 January, the French Fathers of the Society of M.E.P. withdrew and the Salesian Fathers officially started to work in the new mission. He gave them an order: "Keep things going, nothing must be changed at least for one year; if there is need to change ask my permission first...."

Between the 6th and the 20th of January 1929, Fr. Gaetano Pasotti with Fr. Joseph Pinaffo went to the South to receive officially the two Monthons of Pattani and Phuket from the French Fathers of the Vicariate of Malacca.

While he was in Phuket, he wrote a letter to the Rector Major telling him about the warm welcome he received from the Governor of the Is-

[33] See Fr. Costet: Histoire de la Mission Siam and Laos N. 17.

[34] See Records of the Mission Council 13/10/1931 and also 29/6/1932.

land of Phuket.[35] The preoccupations and the stress to get everything going well had an impact on his health. He got very sick and in April, he went to Italy for the Salesian Chapter and to recover. He came back on 30 April 1930.

When he came back, he went to the North of Siam to survey the place. The Congregation of Propaganda Fide, seeing the massive arrival of the Salesians, had an idea of giving them also the Mission of Chieng Mai. But after four years of contacts, this plan was dropped, because the Missionaries of the Society of the M.E.P. were not of the same idea.

Fr. G. Pasotti traveled a lot to keep contacts with missionaries, see the work, give approval for the new projects and look for new ways for pastoral work. He understood that the rural areas were suitable to settle new comers or poor families to build their life, but the larger markets in towns were more suitable places for schools and youth centres. Fr. Gaetano Pasotti had soon singled out some places which, in his understanding were particularly suitable for new foundation or development: Banpong, Ratchaburi and Hua Hin Banpong, a Chinese market town was the first place to receive a special attention and care. With great confidence in the Providence, Fr. Pasotti allowed Fr. Joseph Pinaffo to build a new building for the already existing small wooden school of St. Joseph. In December 1932, this building was opened. This was the first the Salesians built in Siam. St. Joseph School made steady progress up to these days. Later, the new church building was built. The Catholic Community here made rapid progress and now is still the biggest centre of the Diocese of Ratchaburi.

Ratchaburi: the provincial town was the next target. When, in the year 1933, Fr. Pasotti got some more priests, he was already planning new foundations. He appointed a young but zealous missionary to this task: Fr. Mario Ruzzeddu. In April 1934, at the young age of 24, he was assigned to start the new foundation: Don Bosco, in the town of Ratcchaburi. He opened a church, a youth centre and an evening class teaching. Anyhow, this place did not make progress, because of financial problems and after five years of hard work it was closed. It was reopened in 1955 by Msgr. Peter Carretto with a real great plan. Now it is a big complex and the centre of the Diocese.[36]

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[35] See letter 20/1/1929.

[36] This subject will be continued with the topic missionary trips in the South.

4.3. *Important achievements in the mission: Sixth task: The schools.*

The Salesians arrived in the Kingdom of Siam at a time when the Kingdom was issuing the laws about compulsory Education (1918–1932). In Bangkok, there were already some prestigious colleges, but in the upcountry, the education was still rather limited to the male sex in the Pagodas.

With the new laws, the French missionaries had already opened simple schools for the Catholics near the churches. But all these schools, except for Bangnokkhuek and were only very simple convent schools with two rooms and a catechist teacher.

The Salesians, being an educational Congregation, saw at once the importance to open the schools also to the non-Catholics. So within 12 years since their arrival, the Salesians had already upgraded all the existing schools and opened others in the small mission stations.

4.4. *Missionary trips to the South and new presences*

As Fr. Ignatius Canazei reported to the Rector Major in the 16 provinces along the 1,200 km long peninsula South of Ratchaburi, there was absolutely no church or any christian community. Fr. Peter Ricaldone suggested that later the South could be the place for another mission.

Hua Hin. Staying at Ratchaburi, Fr. Mario Ruzzeddu in 1934, started to visit the catholic families in Hua Hin and Prachuab (120 km further South). In October, he was able to open the first chapel in Hua Hin, bought the present precious piece of land not far from the sea as a place for summer vacations. A year later, the mission built a vacation house and the St. Theresa Church was transferred to the new place. After the Second World War, this became the place for the formation house, a school and the retreat house. Now it is a flourishing tourist place.

4.5. *Hat Yai (nearly 1,000 km. South of Bangkok).*

In 1935, Fr. Mario Ruzzeddu started to go further South of Hua Hin to visit the 14 southern provinces. Msgr. Pasotti too went down to visit the Chinese people. Starting in 1936, the trips to Chumphon, Surathhnai, Phuket, Hat Yai and all the other provinces were quite regular at least

twice a year for six years, traveling only with public means and spending 20 to 40 days for each trip. In 1937, Msgr. Pasotti opened St. Peter Church in Betong, a Chinese District near the border of Malaysia.

In 1940, Msgr. Pasotti and the Provincial had singled out Hat Yai as the more suitable place to open the first Catholic Centre in the South. In February 1941, Fr. Mario Ruzzeddu went to stay in Hat Yai and opened the first Catholic Centre of the South. From there, he took care to visit all the scattered Catholic Families in the 14 provinces of the South. Up to now Hat Yai is still the Salesian centre of the South, even though Suratthani has become the Diocesan centre.

4.6. *Importants events: the Salesians and the Persecution*

After nearly 90 years of peace, freedom and steady progress for the Church in Siam, the situation for the Catholics became critical once again. In 1934, a nationalist military government went to power and began to change laws according to its policies. In 1939, the Dictator Luang Phibun Songkhram became Prime Minister. In 1940, taking advantage that France was overrun by the Germans in Europe, he prepared to go to war against France in Indochina.[37]

The Persecution: after a few months of nationalistic propaganda against the French by radio and newspapers, on 28 November 1940, all the French were ordered to move out of the Eastern Provinces and leave the country including priests, brothers and nuns. Besides, since the catholics were related to the French Fathers, brothers or nuns, the Thais thought that in case of war they might also take side for the French, so the propaganda was also inciting all to reject the French Religion and become Buddhist for the sake of national unity.

So some nationalist extremist groups, with the support of the government, and also some fervent government officials took advantage of the situation to go against the Catholic Institutions and to compel everybody to declare themselves Buddhist for the sake of unity in time of war. For this purpose, a day was appointed for the ceremony: on 14 February 1941, the Buddhist feast of Makhabucha, many Catholics went to sign their name out of fear.

[37] See historical background at the beginning.

The persecution of the Catholics and Catholic Institution was particularly fierce in the two months of December 1940 and January 1941. At the beginning of February 1941, an order was issued, to stop violence against non Buddhists, but in many places the persecution continued until 1944.

The persecution was devastating in the Eastern Provinces touched by the one month war. Some Thai priests and nuns were imprisoned or compelled to take off their religious robes. The Catholic Schools and churches were closed or torn down. The Catholics were harassed in many ways.

In December 1940, in the Village of Songkhon in the Nakhon Phanom Province near the River Maekhong, seven people, who refused to deny their religion, were shot dead and became the first Thai Martyrs. In January 1941, some Thai priests were imprisoned and declared guilty. Fr. Nicolaus Boonkert Kitbanrung, after three years in prison, died after converting to the catholic faith other 68 people in prison. He, together with the seven of Sonkhon are now the Blessed eight Thai Martyrs.

4.7. *The precious work of Salesians.*

In 1940, the Salesians had 33 priests. They were planning new foundations, but had not yet started any, other than the Procure in Bangkok. When the persecution broke out, the Salesians, being Italians, were free to speak, write and go around. So somebody started to write about the Freedom of Religion stated in the Constitution (art. 13); others were called privately by the Thai priests or Catholics to help some churches nearby (Fr. Ceccarelli to Nong Hin, Fr. Hector Frigerio and Fr. John Casetta to Nakhon Chaisi and Fr. Charles Casetta and Joseph Pinaffo to Chieng Mai).

On 20 February 1941, Msgr. René Perros, in a handwritten note, asked the help of the Salesians to guard the Sacred Heart Seminary of Sriracha. Then through Fr. Joakim Thieo, in a written agreement, he asked for Salesian priests to help the churches on the border East of Bangkok.

Let me cite an important letter of the Provincial Fr. John Casetta to the Rector Major on the 14 of March 1941. I shall write it in Italian as it was written:

> "Su 18 Padri francesi, 13 sono partiti (per Saigon).... Sono partiti anche 13 Brothers Monfortiani e 15 Suore. Quindi molte cristianità e opere nel

> Vicariato di Bangkok sono senza pastore. Il Vescovo venne ripetutamente a supplicarmi di mandare salesiani nei posti più importanti. Si tratta di salvare la Chiesa in Thailandia. Assicuro che i nostri non risparmiano sacrifizi. Mio primo impegno sarà di salvaguardare la salvezza dei Confratelli, di non lasciarli soli. Ma, essendo la "salus populi" che è in gioco, ed essendo la situazione gravissima, domando di poter, d'accordo con il consiglio, approfittare della facoltà che mi ha dato in gennaio di destinare, in periodo così anormale, sacerdoti a salvare le cristianità pericolanti, trasferendoli secondo il bisogno.... Siamo, amatissimo Padre, in difficilissime condizioni. Ci buttiamo umilmente ai piedi della cara Madre Ausiliatrice e La supplichiamo a volerci aiutare, perchè siamo degni del nostro Padre Don Bosco.... Qualunque cosa disponga di noi il Signore, speriamo con l'aiuto di Don Bosco, di essere degni dell'ora che passa per il bene di questo caro popolo. Don Casetta".

Starting in March 1941, Some Salesian priests (Fr. Costanzo Cavalla and Fr. Delfino Crespi) took turns to guard the Seminary of Sriracha. Some went to take care of some churches on the eastern border, especially around Sriracha.

In April, also the substitute of the Bishop of Laos, Fr. Srinuan asked for the help of the Salesians for the churches in the North East. Before sending the Salesian priests, with a circular letter, Fr. John Casetta asked the opinion of all the confreres. All were of the same opinion: we have to go. In all, 12 Salesian priests then went to the East and the North East to give courage and revive the Catholic Communities in the Vicariate of Nong Saeng, especially in Ubon, Nakhon Phanom, Sakon Nakhon. Fr. Joseph Pinaffo was also taken prisoner, because he was too outspoken. But then, he was quickly released, because he was Italian. The same Fr. Joseph Pinaffo then wrote in his diary all what happened to him and the other Salesian priests between May 1941 to October 1943.

Msgr. Pasotti, after being named and consecrated bishop, had to take up the duty of Apostolic Delegate for one year and Administrator of the Vicariate of Laos for five years. He called all those who wanted to further their studies as seminarians, to the Mission Seminary in Bangnokkhuek. With a special permission from the Ministry of Interior, he also visited all the churches in the North East and asked the Governor to reopen many of them. In November 1944, after the change of government, he also went to see the new Minister of Interior and obtained the restitution of all the properties of the church in the North East.[38]

[38] See Diary of Fr. Joseph Pinaffo... Salesian provincial archive.

5. Some problems of the personnel. The restart in 1948

5.1. *Some problems regarding the confreres*

Some statistics: In the first year 1927, the Salesians who arrived in the Mission of Siam were already 28. One died in August 1928. In December 1928, other 20 arrived. In 1930, other 28 confreres arrived in two groups: that is 75 in only three years.

Then in 1935 – 36 other groups arrived. When the Thai Province was erected in December 1937, the Salesian confreres sent to the Mission of Ratchaburi were already 99. Together with 13 Thais who had also joined, the total number could have been 112. They were only 84, because two died and other 26 returned.

At the end of the year 1947, the total number of foreign confreres who arrived was 102. The Thais were 14. So the total number could have been 116. Of these 116, two have died, 56 either returned or left. So at the end of the year 1947, the total number of confreres in the Province was only of 58.

This massive arrival and this great number of members that left made great impression.... The Superiors in Turin wanted to know the reasons why so many confreres left. The Provincial Fr. John Casetta had to give some points of explanation: some young confreres were not mature enough nor highly motivated, not ready to endure the sacrifices and difficulties of the mission. Some, when sent for their practical training in mission stations lost their religious spirit and left. Some priests were sent to this mission after they had failed in other places and some of them caused some sufferings to the other confreres.[39] Fr. Peter Carretto, a priest who acquired some credibility and experience while Rector of the Procure in Bangkok during the Persecution and the war, while he was Rector in the St. Joseph College Banpong in 1946, wrote a letter to the Superiors in Turin, because he was asked to do so by some confreres who had great trust in him.[40] The letter is four pages long. It tells of the state of the Province in its crude reality:

- Too many idle confreres jammed in Banpong.
- It was time to open new presences with courage.

[39] See letter of Fr. John Casetta to the Superiors 18/2/1939 and 14/11/1939.
[40] See the letter of Fr. Peter Carretto to Fr. Berruti 23/12/1946.

- The Province needed a change, because some have been in key position for too long a time with little fatherly spirit of Don Bosco.
- A number of confreres did not trust nor cooperate with the Superiors.

Actually the Provincial Fr. John Casetta was preparing some new presences: Hat Yai, Hua Hin and the technical school in Bangkok. But he had some financial problems. He also had to solve the problem of difficult confreres.

Later, Fr. Peter Carretto was called to Turin and named Provincial with clear orders on what to do and how to proceed with the difficult confreres. He carried out the task with decision and in good accord with the Superiors.

In 1948, the Apostolic Delegate told Fr. Peter Carretto that he felt the duty to send his report to Rome, because he was concerned about the Salesians. Fr. Peter Carretto asked him for some time to settle everything. In 1948 there was a great change and restart: (1) The House of Formation was opened in Hua Hin. (2) There were new foundations: Hua Hin, Hat Yai, Don Bosco Technical school in Bangkok; actually all prepared by the former Provincial. (3) A new Provincial and new Rectors: new people in key positions. (4) New groups of missionaries arrived.

In 1967 the Salesians were 123 and there was a great variety of work.

5.2. *Some personal remarks*

- ❑ The fact that so many young Confreres were sent to the new Mission in Siam and in a short period of time, required that the mission be entrusted to them as early as in 1929.
- ❑ The Salesians had too few priests to attend to the formation of the confreres and to the pastoral work of the mission. And also they had too little experience of the Thai culture and mission work in Siam.
- ❑ From some points of view, so many young confreres and still in the period of formation sent to the mission since the beginning caused some concerns and difficulties to the mission as a whole. The house of formation was not well equipped for the job. There were some financial and natural difficulties. Some of the

confreres were not mature enough or highly motivated; they easily got discouraged and left.

- From other points of view, if we consider the good number of young and capable priests the Salesians had in 1940 (33) and the precious work they did for the Church in Thailand during the persecution, we can say that this had been arranged by the Providence of God.

As soon as Msgr. Pasotti was appointed Apostolic Delegate and also Apostolic Vicar of the Vicariate of Laos, he wrote to Fr. Braga, expressing this view:

> "It is only for the love of God that I could bow my head to receive all this. I now understand the meaning of obedience after I have experienced the heavy burden of it on my own shoulder. Maybe the Providence of God sent and prepared the Salesians, so that in the moment of need they were there ready to do the job and save so many people in this great thunderstorm. I assure you that the sons of St. John Bosco will do their best to accomplish the will of God with great responsibility..."[41].

[41] See letter 27/10/1941.

THE FIRST SALESIANS IN EAST TIMOR: 1927 - 1929

*Amador Anjos SDB**

Introduction

The purpose of this work is to show the process of the first presence of the Salesians in East Timor, between 1927 and 1929.

It is a meteoric presence for it did not last two whole years and it is also intriguing due to questions that rose. In fact, how is it possible that the Salesians decided to abandon the Island shortly after a year and a half, when the Salesians had accepted the administration of a school of arts and crafts existing already in Dili (capital of the territory) – after having celebrated a contract with the Bishop of Macau, José da Costa Nunes, for a sexennium – what important reasons led the Major Superiors to take such a decision before the bilateral contract celebrated in January 1927 come to an end?

Such questions we tried to answer based on existing documents, mostly in the Archivio Salesiano Centrale (Rome) and in the Archive of the Portuguese Salesian Province (Lisbon), to try to dissipate the heavy cloud of mystery that wondered the island and in the range of the Provinces of the Salesians in Portugal and China.

Our investigation was based upon the following documents:

- Letters (the ones that were possible to consult) by Fr. Pietro Ricaldone, Prefect-General and afterwards Superior–General of the Salesian Society; Ignazio Canazei, Superior of the houses of the Salesians in China; Erminio Rossetti, Superior of the Salesian Mission in Dili – 1927-29; Calisto Caravario, E. Rossetti's fellow worker in the Mission; José da Costa Nunes, Bishop of Macau;
- Diary by Calisto Caravario;
- Report by Pietro Ricaldone, on the extraordinary visit to the Far East in 1927 (Relazione...);
- Report on the first presence of the Salesians in Timor, by Erminio Rossetti ("Note sul
Vicariato di Timor-Dili", 9.12.1935);
- Proceedings of the Superior Chapter [Council] ("Verbali delle Riunioni dei Capitolari").

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* Fr. Amador Anjos is a Salesian historian based in the Provincial House of Lisbon in Portugal.

It is also fitting to mention the book by Teófilo Duarte on Timor (Timor-Antecâmara do Inferno, Famalicão, 1930), whose mandate as Governor of the aforesaid colony (1927-28) occurred at the same time as the first presence of the Salesians in the Island.

We believe that any other documents that might appear besides our archive research will not change substantially the conclusions we take.

1. Antecedents (background)

Based on what we achieved, the perspective of the Salesians entering in Timor to collaborate in the missionary work of that afar land in Southeast Asia, which depended on Portugal until 1975, goes back to the last decade of the 19th century. And it was due, firstly, to the Jesuit priest Francesco Saverio Rondina.

1.1. *Mediation of Francesco Saverio Rondina*

This Italian Jesuit was very acquainted to the Portuguese overseas action in the Far East due to having worked in Macau. He came to Lisbon in 1859 – the start of the restoration of the religious order Society of Jesus in Portugal – where he exercised the professorship for a brief period of time in the school Colégio de Campolide. In 1862, he arrived in Macau, where he still teaches in the famous school Colégio-Seminário de S. José administered by the Jesuits. His influence in this new field of action was remarkable given his vast culture. Nine years gone by, he had to leave Macau and returned to Italy to become part of the editorial body of the magazine "Civiltà Cattolica". Through his contacts with the Salesians, he came to know that they were in a way interested about the missions in China, a thought that continued since the Founder.

In his vast correspondence with Arturo Conelli, he tried to show him that the better way to enter the Chinese Empire was through the city of Macau, in which was advisable to set an advanced post. At the same time, he offered to be the mediator between the Salesians and the Bishop of that territory and to mobilize his local friends, as to realise such a project. In a letter dated September 1890, Rondina makes a significant reference to the chances of the Salesians to also set foot (and even before) in Timor, which was part of the diocese of Macau:

> "I have just received from Macau a letter from Fr. Nunes, my confrere, written in the name of the Bishop, in which he tells me that His Most Reverend Excellency has gladly accepted my project on introducing the Salesians there. In his recent visit to the Island of Timor [...], he understood the great need of evangelic workers [...]. Therefore, see if your Superior would be willing to send some missionaries to Macau, as to follow the Bishop's requests in that colony, with the purpose of evangelizing Timor and then having also a house in Macau, which would be equivalent to setting a foot in China, as the venerable Don Bosco passionately desired".[1]

Less than a month after, the Superior General of the Salesians, Fr. Michele Rua, wrote to the Bishop of Macau, António J. Medeiros, showing himself willing to uphold the wish to have the Salesians in Macau and Timor.

> "Reverend Excellency [...]. The eminent Fr. Rondina explained the contents of the letters addressed to him from Macau, on behalf of Your Excellency, showing the desire to have the children of Don Bosco in your diocese [...], which means that it would be our intention to establish ourselves permanently in Macau [...]. After establishing this mission in Macau, we would gladly take charge of evangelising Timor".[2]

In another letter written two years later, Rondina points out Timor again as an eventual first missionary goal:

> "As far the Chinese mission is concerned, I have received letter from our confreres in Macau, which tell me that for now it is impossible to found [here] a school [due to an economic recession in the territory]. An attempt by the Portuguese Government might be well succeeded if the Salesian Congregation [firstly] accepts the mission in Timor, dependent on Macau".[3]

1.2. *Priority of Macau*

According to Fr. Michele Rua's letter, we know that the missionary perspective in Timor provoked enthusiasm; however, the proposal of Macau was seen as a priority. Actually, everything led to the goal of opening here the first presence of the Salesians in the Far East.

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[1] Letter *Rondina-Conelli,* Rome, 10.9.1890, quote by A. KIRSCHNER, in *Don Bosco and China.* Macau 1970, pages 97-98.
[2] Letter *Rua –Medeiros*, 3.10.1890, in A. KIRSCHNER, in *Don Bosco and China,* page 99.
[3] Letter Rondina-Conelli, 3.12.1892, *ibid.*, page 124.

Several difficulties delayed such a realisation and we distinguish the following: (a) the disease of Fr. Conelli chosen to lead the group of missionaries going to Macau; (b) the refusal, at a given time, of the government of Lisbon in paying the respective travel fares.

Finally, in February 1906 – after several requests from Bishop João Paulino de Azevedo e Castro – the group entered Macau commanded not by Fr. Arturo Conelli, weakened due to the disease, but by Fr. Luís Versiglia, who later became bishop and martyr in China. The work that awaited the Salesian missionaries in Macau was the Orphanage Imaculada Conceição (an institution dependant on the diocese), in other words, a boarding school of arts and crafts for poor Chinese children and young people.

1.3. *Mediation of Bishop José da Costa Nunes*

Only in 1927 – in line with the wish of Rondina and the Superior-General Fr. Michele Rua did the Salesians entered Timor. For this purpose, contributed the effective persistency of José da Costa Nunes, Bishop of Macau between 1919 and 1940, and a close and dedicated friend of the Salesians. He had visited the territory both in 1924 and 1926, realising its religious state.

He verified particularly, on his second visit, the precarious state of an existing school of arts and crafts in Dili, while remembering that the Salesians would be the right people to take care of it, having in consideration the success obtained in Macau and in many other places. When returning to Macau (January 1927), where at that time resided the Superior of the Chinese province of the Salesians (Ignazio Canazei), José da Costa Nunes tried straight away to arrange a meeting to expose to him the problems of the mission in Timor.

Ignazio Canazei, an Italian, approved the proposal after obtaining assent of the Provincial Council and the Major Superiors. The proposal covered the administration of the above mentioned school and the responsibility of the parish of Dili.

2. Covenant

Both parties agreed to sign an agreement for six years, which ensured the rights and obligations of each party during this period, at the end of which, the situation would be reevaluated.

The ASC has a declaration by Canazei, which displays the terms in which the situation occurred:

> "Last January, the Bishop of Macau asked us instantly that we accepted the small professional school in Dili. The Provincial immediately after the agreement of his Council, regarding that the means for the maintenance of the new house and the Salesian staff were assured by means of a contract and that it was easily possible to find the necessary people to erect the new house (at least six confreres), sent a telegram right away to [Don] Filippo Rinaldi [Superior-General], asking for his approval. [Don Filippo Rinaldi [also] answered with a telegram on 21 January: "Accept opening Timor".[4] Meanwhile it was established between ourselves and the Bishop a contract (covenant) to regulate the new house of Dili(Timor) for a period of six years. Macau, 31st of January 1927. P. J. Canazei".[5]

We transcribe only the following articles of the contract:

1- The School of Arts and Crafts of Dili (Timor) is trusted to the Pious Salesian Society, which agrees to give to its boarding students a professional, civil, moral and religious education according to its teaching methods.

3- The power to enroll or to expel students belongs to the Administration of the school, giving preference in the admission to those recommended by the Mission.

4- The Administration is free [regarding] the discipline and the running of the school

9- The director will be paid 70 patacas[6] monthly; the priests 50; the students/clerics 30 and the masters 40.

12- All improvements introduced in the school belong to the Mission...

18- The validity of this covenant will be six years. When one of the parties wishes to change it, it must notify the other party, at least six months in advance. Macau, January 1927.[7]

3. The Island of Timor

Timor is an island off Southeast Asia in the archipelago of Sonda, 430 miles off Australia. It has around 34,000 km^2. A Portuguese colony

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[4] Cf ASC (Archivio Salesiano Centrale [Roma]) D 873, Verbali V.

[5] AIC (Archivio dell'Ispettoria Cinese [Hong Kong]).

[6] The ancient *pataca* corresponded to 9.50 liras, as it said in the Italian text (note).

[7] ASC F 437.

since the 16th century, its domain was divided between Portugal (eastern half) and Holland (western half) from the middle of the 17th century onwards.

Together with the western side of Timor the islands of Solor and Flores continued to depend on Portugal until the middle of the 19th century, when they were given to Holland. The Dutch half accompanied the formation of the present Republic of Indonesia (1945). The other half, East Timor, with around 19,000 km^2 was kept under Portuguese domain until 1975, when it was invaded and occupied by Indonesia. We will only be concern about this eastern half.[8]

The christian mission of Timor in the Islands of Solor and Flores, from the second half of the 16th century until the beginning of the 18th century, was mostly work of the Dominicans whom, for over a century, had the government of the island in their hands under the double religious and civil direction. With the expulsion of religious institutes of the Portuguese domain in 1834, the missions were abandoned almost completely. In Timor, due to the religious people backing away, the Portuguese presence also became insignificant, for they were the ones that gave religious and civil consistence. In fact, the engagement they put in building churches and organising catechesis centres also corresponded to the engagement they possessed in building and feeding schools and assistance centres.

After a long period of missionary decline, that lasted almost half a century, came a period of revival with the clairvoyant and promised work of Fr. António Joaquim Medeiros – member of the Missionary Society of Cernache and later Bishop of Macau – initiated in 1875. It was mainly after his second visit to Timor (1877), being a General-Vicar and accompanied by seven missionaries of the same society who worked there, that their dynamic and organised action was felt at the levels of evangelisation and culture. As a Bishop, he introduced on the Island the religious order of the Canossians and opened the way to the Jesuits that started in 1899

[8] The takeover of East Timor lasted until August 1999, the year in which, under the protection of the United Nations, the people of East Timor were allowed to express through a referendum, their will to be an independent country. Before and mostly right after the referendum, the territory suffered horrible atrocities provoked or supported by the Indonesian forces that were against the independence movement, atrocities which terrified the civilised world. Regarding the Japanese invasion between 1942 and 1945, during the Second World War, it left the island in ruins and took thousands of lives. And after thirty years, the price of the subjugation of East Timor by Indonesia, translated into more than 150,000 deaths. Meanwhile the independence would be proclaimed and worldwide acknowledged on 20 May 2002.

(two years after the death of the Bishop), their missionary work in Soibada, where they founded a secondary school which stood out due to having educated many leaders of Timor.[9]

Unfortunately, this evangelic and promotional impulse in favour of the people of Timor was stopped by a new strike by the republican regime (1910) against the Church and its missionary activity.

After a decade of turbulence, the Church managed to restore and recompose itself and to reassume the missionary activity with the support of the State. It was in this climate of slow and fragmentary recovery that the entry of the Salesians in Timor in 1927 fitted in.

4. The long-last realisation of the dream

Thirty-seven years passed between the time in which Fr. Rondina presented the Salesians the proposal to launch a missionary work in Timor (1890) and the moment when the realisation came true (1927). The people chosen for this work were the following: Fr. Erminio Rossetti (superior), Fr. António Carvalho (parish priest), Calisto Caravario (student of Theology)[10] and two lay Salesians: Luigi Venturelli (locksmith master) and Roberto Verona (carpenter master). Six or seven months later another lay Salesian would join them: Antonio Narciso (factotum). They were all Italians except António Carvalho, who was a Portuguese.

4.1. *The journey*

The journey of the five missionaries from Macau to Timor lasted twenty days: from 17 March to 6 April. As the young Calisto Caravario wrote in his diary on board the ship Tjimanoek – which received them on the 7th in Hong Kong – was a merchant ship and on top of that carried "more than 2,200 Chinese [immigrants accommodated in any way on the deck and giving] a truly sad spectacle". This would be enough for us to imagine how uncomfortable the passengers were, at least until the island of Samatra and Java, where most of them were dumped, including three dead people.

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[9] It was also this Bishop that opened the Salesians (as we saw) the path to Macau and Timor.
[10] Calisto Caravario would suffer, a few years later, the martyrdom in China together with the Salesian Bishop Luigi Versiglia (1930). Both were canonised on 1 October 2000.

However, it is noticeable that the narrator of the journey does not stop with unpleasant references related to the life on board the ship. He prefers to call the attention to the exotic curiosities and beauties of the many places where the ship passed, some of which can be seen closely such as: Padang, Batavia (Jakarta), Samarang, Macassar, Waingapu, Savu, Roti, Kupang and Atapupu (the last two harbours are close to the Dutch Timor). In Kupang, capital of the Dutch half, they descended and visited the city, enhancing its beauty. Referring to this moment of first contact with the island of Timor, Caravario writes: "We have reached the land of our mission, the land which [will be the object] of our love and perhaps our permanent dwelling".

4.2. *Arrival in East-Timor: first impressions*

They arrived in Dili, the capital of East Timor, around three o'clock on 6 April. "I thank the Lord from the bottom of my heart – adds Caravario – for helping us and calling us here". The superior of the Mission, Fr. Manuel Patrício Mendes, was expecting them together with some priests that offered them a most cordial welcome. What followed was the visit to the parish and the house that awaited them and where they would develop their activity in favour of a youth that needed everything. Before the picture that was presented to him, Caravario exclaimed: "Hooray for poverty!" Then, he suspended the diary to start again only in February 1929, after the closing of the Salesian work in Dili was ordered, as someone who writes his memories and refers to a parenthesis in life.[11]

In this part of the diary, Caravario introduced, besides other aspects, the physiognomy of the territory comparing its climate to an everlasting spring, the backwardness of the population of the city, its great poverty and insufficient source of food, its almost abandonment by the central administration and its almost lack of missionaries, consequence of the expulsion of the religious orders in 1910. At the time, the only remaining institute working in Timor was the institute of the Canossians, which after the expulsion in 1910, returned in 1923.[12]

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[11] C. Caravario, *Diary,* page 12.

[12] *Ibid.,* page 20. The Jesuits, also expelled in 1910, would return in 1958 (and stable in 1961) after the Salesians, which entered again in 1946.

A small group of secular priests (nine or ten) attended in a way, to the pastoral needs of these poor people. One of the most negative aspects the missionaries had, were the bad examples and the radical ideas of the Portuguese workers serving the State, some of which were "sons of the revolution".[13]

On the other hand – warns Caravario - the native population, having in consideration their good nature and the fact that they depended on no organized religion, showed itself receptive to the evangelic message: "The field is very wide and presents less difficulties compared to other places".[14]

4.3. *First steps*

A letter from the Superior of the mission, Fr. Erminio Rossetti, addressed to the Superior General and published in Bolletino Salesiano (August 1927), explained how it all happened in the beginning. It started by presenting a flattering perspective regarding the missionary work:

> "With suited means and staff, we could rapidly extend ourselves to the whole territory of [East] Timor where close to 200,000 natives are still pagan and we would like to see them, in a future not far away, as sons of the Church".[15]

Led by the desire to know the reality of the Island in its chorographic and human aspects, a few days after the arrival in Dili, he went on a journey of 15 days to the innermost territory, cohabiting with the veteran of the Portuguese missionaries and visiting the main centers of the Mission. During this journey he would admire the "wonderful vegetation" and contacting with all native population, he felt impressed by their "great simplicity of habits" and with no knowledge "of a world different from theirs".

A special reference to the School of Arts and Crafts in Dili was made, for it was this activity that determined the coming of the Salesians to this place:

> "We have opened within a week the three workshops for locksmiths, carpenters and shoemakers; the students are 25 at the moment; they give hope and demonstrate good will. We hope to be able to have more students, as

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[13] *Ibid.*, page 18.

[14] *Ibid.*, page 20.

[15] BS, August 1927, pages 241-242. The total population of East-Timor, according to the letter, was 500,000 inhabitants.

> soon as we can find the means that allow us a better organisation and a better coverage. The house has a completely Salesian orientation. We have started with a few basic exercises for a band of music and singing. They already learned almost some of our chants and part of the «Mass of the Angels» and we feel happy about continuing with enthusiasm this education that became a very functional and effective mean of christian education, especially regarding the missions".[16]

Before ending the letter, the author referred to the needs, some of which regarding the most basic and necessary things, such as nocturnal lighting. He therefore appealed to benefactors, to allow the acquisition of "a small dynamo with a small oil engine or another system [that] allowed them to lengthen the day for a few hours, giving life to this poor house and becoming the source of well being to all the mission".[17] Caravario gave us an identical testimony of extreme poverty in Timor in his diary, right after visiting the school and the parish.[18]

The initial enthusiasm of the new missionaries in carrying out the endeavoured work, soon found some internal problems. The shoemaking workshop stopped working in June 1927, due to the quitting of the (non-Salesian) master. The same happened to the locksmith workshop, in April of the following year, due to the fact that the Salesian master had to return to Italy because of his bad character.[19] Misunderstandings between the parish priest António Carvalho and the Superior aggravated the situation. Despite these unexpected internal obstacles, the relationship between the Salesians and the external environment (the civil authorities, secular priests and the people in general) were always excellent.

5. Broken perspectives

Although the material conditions were not the best, the perspective of the future was still hopeful: "a very wide field" and "less difficulties compared to other places" to the evangelisation action, as the young Caravario writes; the possibility to quickly reach all of East Timor and to effectively contribute to turn "the 200,000 natives" into christians, as Erminio Rossetti says. This would be possible in a short or medium term,

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[16] *Ibid.*

[17] *Ibid.*

[18] C. Caravario, *Diary,* page 12.

[19] *Ibid.*, page 21. The carpenter workshop was the only one continuing to work.

if the staff would come to support the aspirations and to concretize and organize action.

Before this scenery of needs, on one hand and optimism on the other, how do you explain that after less than a year and a half, an order from superior in the centre of the congregation determined the immediate exit of the newly arrived missionaries to the island of Timor? We were presented with a new matter, as the Salesian Bishop in Timor Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo says, that was kept secret and surrounded by mystery and that needed to be cleared. And that is what we would try to accomplish in the following pages.

6. Pietro Ricaldone and the Salesians in Timor

Believing the declarations Fr. Erminio Rossetti had given in an interview with the Provincial Armando Monteiro in 1962 (Lisbon), Fr. Ricaldone would have been the only one or at least the main responsible for the closing of the Salesian work in Timor.[20] After taking notice of the acceptance of this work, the Prefect General of the Salesian Society, according to Rossetti, directed a serious accusation more or less in these terms: "The Holy See offers important and promising missions and you decide to open here such an insignificant school with no future! You'd better close it down!".

One must realise that Fr. Ricaldone, when visiting the Far East in 1927,[21] he had included in his diary/journal, a journey to Timor to understand the viability or impracticability of the work, but the Superior General discouraged him given the great distance of the island and the need for him to return as fast as he could to Turin. However, it was settled that the visit – not made by him – would be carried out by Canazei as soon as he could. Meanwhile, after little more than a month journeying to the Far East, Fr. Ricaldone wrote two letters, one in January and the other in February, to Canazei clearly expressing what he thinks about Timor:

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[20] At the end of the 1920s, Fr. Pietro Ricaldone was the strong man of the Salesian Society, regarding not only his function in the Congregation – Prefect General or Vicar of the Superior General – but also the age and fragile health of the latter. The weight of his authority was felt for thirty years: from 1922 to 1932, as Prefect General and from 1932 to 1951 as Superior General.

[21] Shortly after his departure from Turin, the Superior General authorised the opening of the house in Timor.

> "If you find a way to retrieve the Brothers in an honourable way (coll' onore delle armi), do it (fallo pure): we would be extremely pleased. You can base yourself on the fact that, the conditions proposed by the Bishop are no longer sustainable".[22]
> "Here, we are worried about that institution. When they think it suitable, they will expel us from [Timor] also. Further more, the distance and isolation frightens us. We would not think it wrong if, in a polite manner, we would become free of that weight, about to turn into a nightmare [Noi non vedremmo male che, in bel modo, ci liberassimo da quel peso che risulta un incubo]."[23]

Ricaldone's thought would definitely weigh on the judgment that Canazei himself would lay down regarding the Salesian work in Timor, by visiting the island shortly after.

7. The determinant opinion of Provincial Ignazio Canazei

The visit of the Provincial Ignazio Canazei to East Timor, lasted for almost a month: from 19 April to 15 May 1928. Thus, Canazei had enough time to calmly reflect and analyze the Salesian work in Dili, as well as the conditions for future development, offered by the context of the island.

As it says right at the beginning of the letter, he rode on horseback the whole territory of the mission, to have the most exact idea of the whole. In his appreciation, the negative aspect were dominant over the positive ones, but one cannot deny the main purpose of his ideas regarding the conditions of the territory and the Salesian work.[24] On one hand, if the very modest people showed receptivity, if the missionary work itself and in perspective promised to be fruitful, if the government saw with good eyes the Salesian works and was willing to support them and help them financially, in case they would project beyond the school and to work amidst the people needing the evangelisation and promotion;[25] on the other hand, the following aspects were weighed negatively, besides the cultural delay of the population, the isolation of the Dili community, it was too far away from any other Salesian house, troubled and aggrieved religious life; difficulties of communication; sparse popula-

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[22] ASC, B O790561, letter *Ricaldone-Canazei*, 21 (?).1.1928.
[23] ASC, B O790562, letter *Ricaldone-Canazei,* 21.2.1928 (uncertain date).
[24] However the precariousness of the Salesian work in Timor was mainly due to having a much reduced staff.
[25] *Ibid.*, page 1.

tion; misunderstandings between the secular clergy and the government of the Colony... Considering all these and other facts, Canazei declared not to feel enthusiastic at all to accept such a mission.[26]

The other facts refer mainly to the Salesian work itself,[27] which he thought insignificant and without possibility (or will?) to wind it, by reinforcing the staff. It was an "insignificant school of 20 students", reduced to a carpenter workshop with little application in the island. Before such a situation and with no will to assume evangelic responsibilities outside the school, there was nothing left for the Salesians to do, but to pack their bags and leave.[28]

The following passage of the letter-report leaves us perplexed and raises several questions:

> "[If] we were to remain here, we would have to take into our account at least a part of the mission, which would imply increasing the staff considerably [...]. But [as one understand] from his last (or the last but one), I clearly understand that the desired solution from his Superiors is to leave this place. We shall go within weeks of course, but if we must go I would say: let us go right now. The Bishop will say that we are little serious: you accepted a school and after a year, you leave it without accomplishing any program! But we shall answer him: there is no signed contract that binds us. He might add: accepting the school means signing the contract at least for six years. No doubt that at the moment of presenting the request to [open] the house in Timor to the Superior [General], the Provincial Council had in view the extension of our action, as the Bishop himself had once suggested. But if that extension is not approved by the Superior Chapter [General Council], our only solution is to leave".[29]

Our perplexity before with what is stated above, is due to several incongruities that are quite visible, some of which Canazei himself expresses in the form of an imaginary dialogue with the Bishop of Macau. Amongst the interrogations that arose, we explain the following ones. If the Provincial Council thought of a future extension of the work, why not provide the necessary and capable Salesian staff for that purpose?[30] If a formal agreement between Canazei and the Bishop of Macau had been

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[26] ASC, F 156, letter *Canazei-Ricaldone*, Dili, 1.5.1928, page 1.

[27] That is, the School of Arts and Crafts. The parish is practically ignored: perhaps because, according to declarations of the Fr. Rossetti, the parish priest (António Carvalho) maintained a weak connection with the community as he leads the pastoral activity.

[28] *Ibid.*, pages 1,2.

[29] *Ibid.*, page 3.

[30] The initial group soon lost an element whose spirit shown irreconcilable with the religious life (Venturelli). And the case of Fr. António Carvalho complicated the situation.

established (abovementioned), which was implied from the Salesians the acceptance of a work for six years, how does Canazei asserts that there was no written contract that bounded the Congregation? Unless, it was an informal agreement that an internal problem of the Salesian Province in China has to settle regarding the missionaries who worked there, as Canazei himself says in a letter to the Superior General, alluding to the opening of the work in Timor as a providential opportunity to clear the overload of missionaries in China.[31] In this case, and considering the repetitive complains of the Superiors for lack of staff, we would think that by referring to the excess of missionaries in China, Canazei had in mind that the presence of some elements was dead weight and embarrassing. Which, in the context of the letter-report, would be little ensuring of the quality of the group chosen to Timor. The hypothesis of Canazei being too fast and sudden about accepting the proposal of Timor in 1927, could be confirmed by the severe way Fr. Ricaldone reprimanded him:

> "Here, is also visible the little sense of the Provincial. While Monsignor Versiglia [Salesian Bishop ahead of the vicariate of Shiu Chow, China] often requested staff, he [Canazei] sends a telegram to the Superiors telling them to accept the house in Timor to occupy the staff. Without knowing neither the place nor the conditions, he throws the Brothers on a little island [located] at 20 days or more travelling by boat, where there is no possibility of development and jumping into the dark: we must add that it is a work of the Patronage, to which I already referred to [...]. Not forgetting we had already accepted the house in Hong-Kong; the visitor was arriving; and institutions of that type are not arranged by telegram".[32]

As we have seen above, in an important quote from his letter-report from 1928, Canazei says that in the end, his point of view coincided with the desire of the Major Superiors, or at least the Prefect General to whom the report was written, to abandon Timor: "But [as one understand] from his last (or the last but one).[33] I clearly see, that the desired solution by the Superiors is to leave this place".[34]

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[31] "Questo sbocco di personale per Timor fu per una parte molto provvidenziale, perché al momento in Cina ne avremmo troppo. Anzi di chierici ne abbiamo ancora troppi" (ASC F 156, letter *Canazei-Ricaldone*, Macau, 25.1.1927).

[32] ASC FIS 8, "Relazione visita straordinaria. 7. Timor". We must not deny the pertinence of this observation by the Prefect General. The visit of Canazei to Timor in 1928 should have been made before accepting the work. The problem of the Ecclesiastical/Royal Patronage will be approached next.

[33] Reference to the letter or letters of Ricaldone aforementioned.

[34] ASC F 156, letter-report *Canazei-Ricaldone*, page 2.

When later, in the middle of the 1930s, the perspective of Timor was opened again to the Salesians, Fr. Ricaldone already as Superior General, clearly expressed what his personal position was in 1928, being still the same in 1934.

Here is how he expressed himself to Fr. Carlo Braga, Provincial in China through a letter:

> "As you know, the matter regarding Timor is very difficult. You must remember that it was I myself, who proposed the closing of that house and I confess to you that, I don't feel willing to open it in the same conditions"[35].

After referring several difficulties aforementioned (isolation, distance, complicated accessibility), he gave great importance to the difficulties coming from the Portuguese Patronage. So being it, it seems the right time to dedicate an expanded space to this matter.

8. The shadow of the Patronage

It would be wise to remember, in a short summary, what this right or privilege represented in the beginning and throughout history. This right or privilege, was granted by the Apostolic See, in the middle of the 15th century, to the Portuguese Crown and extinguished with the independence of the colonies from the 1960-70s onward.

Thus, the right of the Patronage constituted, as Nicola Kwalsky writes, "the only effective means to initiate and develop the missionary work [throughout the discovered lands]. [Such institution] is connected to its time and must be regarded in consonance with the time's criteria".[36] Such institution implied a group of rights (such as the presentation of the bishops and the submission of the missionaries to the Portuguese State) and obligations (such as building churches and other ecclesiastic support facilities, encouraging the missionary vocation and a financial help to the workers of the Gospel). While the just balance between rights and obligations was kept,[37] that is, until the middle of the 18th century – the Patron-

[35] AIC, letter *Ricaldone-Braga,* 20.11.1934.

[36] Nicola Kowalsky, *Enciclopedia Cattolica,* vol. IX, col.528, 1952. The right of the Patronage granted to the Spanish Crown (Patronate).

[37] A relative and unstable balance, that is, in accordance with the needs of the human institutions, mainly, as it happened, when expansionist and political intentions interfered with spiritual or religious motivations.

age had sense and contributed to the propagation of the faith, although with undeniable shadows, limitations and abuses.

When the Jesuits were expelled in 1759 by the Marquis of Pombal, the decline of the missions depending on the Portuguese State started, because he took from them the main source of missionaries, the order Society of Jesus. The Patronage had no longer meaning when, in 1834, all the religious institutes, fundamental to the oversees missions, were expelled by the liberal regime. And hence, the plain validation of the measures adopted by the Propaganda Fide, so as to fill in the gaps rising every year.

The Apostolic Nuncio, Vincenzo Vannuteli, had reason to blame the Portuguese government, in 1887, on one hand for persisting in reclaiming a historic right and on the other for equally betraying historic compromises, by setting the greatest obstacles to the evangelisation and continuing to oppose the religious congregations. This happened with already tangible signs of change at the time.[38] This change, in a sense of reopening the religious congregations and consequent missionary recovery was however, contrasted by a new expulsion of the same congregations in 1910 by the founders of the Republic.

When the Salesians entered Timor by the end of the 1920s, several congregations were already established – including the Salesian Congregation that had started again the activities in our country in 1920 – and with them, the slow awakening of the missionary work sheltered by the Patronage. It must be said, confirming the truth, that the support given to the missions was many times defended by the governors of the colonies regardless of the sectarianism of the central government.

One of the Salesians, who showed himself more critical towards the Portuguese Patronage, was undoubtedly Fr. Ricaldone. Amongst his declarations, we can mention the ones that can be found in the aforesaid letter to the Superior of the Salesian Province in China (Carlo Braga) in 1934, when the chance of the Salesians returning to Timor was suggested:

> "The Superiors might be willing to study the possibility of [going to Timor again], as long as it was possible to carry out a true mission with several centres, to be able to form a Visitatoria.[39] But how can that happen, if, as you know, they are works of the Patronage, in which soon there will be

[38] According to Nuno da Silva Gonçalves, "*Padroado*", in *Dicionário de História Religiosa de Portugal,* vol. III (IP), Círculo de Leitores, 2001, page 366.

[39] *Visitatoria*, in the Salesian terminology refers to an almost-province.

> pressure from the government and the Bishop demanding Portuguese staff, which we do not possess now nor will in many years to come? This is the main matter, to which you must maintain firm. Unfortunately, every time we must deal with the Patronage, things always end badly".[40]

In the report on his extraordinary visit to the East (1927), Fr. Ricaldone had already showed his thought on this matter:

> "A mission that does not depend on us but on a Bishop, furthermore being a Bishop of the Patronage, will never develop completely according to our criteria, but will have to follow the policy of the Bishop and in this case as well, indirectly from the [Portuguese] Government".[41]

We add two more witnesses about the matter. There is in the ASC a memorandum (pro memoria) in Italian dated of 1 April 1941,[42] and saying "riservato all'Ispettore",[43] containing in his seven-numbered statement of the case, the following affirmation: "For now, the Patronage will accept any [missionary] staff, but afterwards will demand national staff and will send us away, as it happened before".

After regretting the order of closing the house in Timor, as we have seen, Calisto Caravario added in his diary, consonant with the decision of the Superiors:

> "However, I can not dismiss the accuracy of the thought of the Superiors, in abandoning works dependent on patronages and strange missions, due to the fact that they can never reach the desirable flourish [floridezza] of the Salesian life".[44]

About leaving Timor, Caravario wrote a letter to Fr. Ricaldone repeating more or less what was in the diary, stressing and deploring the situation of dependence on a contract:

> "When I heard about a possible abandonment of this work, it seemed to me that such should not happen but, after seeing the course of the events, I got more and more convinced that obedience is always the best. In fact, the

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[40] AIC, *letter Ricaldone-Braga*, Turin, 20.11.1934.

[41] ASC F 156, *Relazione...*, page 20.

[42] To the date follows 5.319 (466) Port(ogallo).

[43] The word *inspector* meaning *provincial* comes from the Founder of the Salesians and is still used in several countries, such as: Italy, Spain and countries from Latin America.

[44] C. Caravario, *Diary*, page 22. How to explain then, the flourish/might that the Salesian work would have in Macau?

> conditions we would have, connected by contacts and little more than executors of the will of others, there was nothing Salesian we could do, while there are many other places of true Salesian work that await us and reclaim the help of our beloved Congregation".[45]

These critics towards the Patronage, deserve a few observations. First of all – we must admit – everyone including the Salesians, were right to criticise it regarding what could be criticised. However, we think that these particular critics – and so to say dated – do not correspond to the historical reality as we can see next.

Fr. Ricaldone affirms that every time the Salesians had to deal with the Patronage, things always ended up badly and suggested that the national feeling of the governmental and ecclesiastic authorities, would lead it to do away with the foreign missionaries, as soon as they could find national staff. This feeling was also referred to by the aforementioned memorandum, which stated that the foreign Salesians were already being removed from the territories under the Portuguese domain.[46]

However, similar accusations were done heedlessly and kept general: no concrete fact was introduced. On the contrary – for what we know of the history of the Salesians in Portugal and his domains – things did not go badly at all. In the several places of the Patronage that they were received in (Macau, Millipore-India, island of Mozambique, Timor and Goa), the Salesians always found a climate of cordial welcome and could do, except for Timor for the already known reasons, a successful and lasting work mainly in Macau.[47] And there weren't traces of suspicions or hindrances or any expulsion by the civil or ecclesiastic authorities, although almost all of them were foreigners. In 1913, the expulsion of the Salesians established in the island of Mozambique, did not depend on the

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[45] ASC A 3490813, letter *Caravario-Ricaldone*, Timor-Dili, 2.4.1929.

[46] Verify abovementioned letter *Ricaldone-Braga*, 20.11.1934. The undeniable national feeling present in the Portuguese colonisation, was actually common to all the countries in the expansionist Europe, particularly stressed in the middle of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th. An interesting case – that has similarities to the Portuguese Patronage – is the one of the *Associazione Nazionale per socorrere i missionari cattolici italiani*, founded by Ernesto Schiaparelli in 1887 in Florence. He was engaged to support moral and economically the Italian catholic missionaries abroad, his final purpose, – in accordance and articulation with the Italian government – being to make the same missionaries, cultural agents and deep down, politicians of Italy. The case of the Salesian missionary Luigi Versiglia, who – also contrary to the Patronage – tried to get close to this institution, is quite clear.

[47] And in Timor, an identical success would happen with the re-entry of the Salesians in 1946.

fact of them being foreigners (two were actually Portuguese), but on the persecution against the Church in 1910, which affected all the missionaries, both foreign and national.[48]

On the other hand, we must honestly recognise that, subject to the critics from Ricaldone and others, there was fear of an intromission by the civil authorities in the Church's affairs. And this was a grounded fear. What we find strange about Ricaldone is not criticising the Patronage, but the fact that he only saw in it hindrances and misdeeds.

Regarding the presence of the foreign missionaries side by side with the Portuguese ones, it would be good to remember that it is constant in the Lusitanian missions. Actually, without their cooperation and given the limitations of our country, it would be impossible to satisfy even the minimum apostolic needs of such large overseas territories. In these territories, men as famous and important as Xavier, Valignano, Ricci, Nobili, Schall and Anchieta, were able to develop freely their extraordinary mission action. Sometimes the number of permanent foreigners was higher than the national. Close to our time, between 1942 and 1950 (we were still in the period of the excessive national feelings), of the 354 missionaries connected to the Patronage, 172 were Portuguese and 182 were foreigners and mostly Italians.[49]

As for Caravario, let us stick to some of his declarations in a letter to Fr. Ricaldone, in which he pointed out his problem regarding "contracts": considering the concrete case, the contract or covenant related to the house of Timor. It appears that the young missionary should not be very convinced about what he now wrote the Prefect General, after the enthusiasm so little ago demonstrated regarding the field of work assumed by the Salesians. These could move at their will ("The direction is completely free when it comes to [conducting] the school" – Article 4 covenant) and it corresponded perfectly to the charisma of the Salesians, which privileged the schools of arts and crafts for poor boys. What sense was there, in telling that in this matter the Salesians were or would be nothing but executors of the will of others, connected to a contract (as it

[48] The Salesians had the same luck in Macau in 1910, but they would return after only two years. Contrary to the affirmation of Ricaldone – "a mission [depending] on a Bishop and furthermore, a Bishop of the Patronage, would never completely develop according to our criteria" – the Salesian experience in this territory is an example of true success.

[49] Distribution of foreign missionaries: 83 Italian, 56 Dutch, 21 Swiss, 11 German and 6 French. Verify Luís F. Thomaz, "*Missões*", in *Dicionário de História Religiosa de Portugal*, vol. III (IP), page 219.

is obvious, any contract binds in a bilateral way, implying obligations and rights from both parties) and that the activity of the school, the Salesians had nothing in it? It seems that our young missionary only started to see the work in Dili with hazy eyes, after knowing that his Superiors thought it impracticable: "...we had the most warm and beautiful hopes...[but], when I heard about a possible abandon of this work [decreed by the superiors] I got convinced...".

Contrary to this wavering position, Fr. Erminio Rossetti, Superior of the mission, kept thinking that this would have a future and always considered its closing hasty and ill-timed. Also contrary to those condemning together the Patronage, Ignacio Canazei recognises that not everything represented disadvantages by living in their shadow. Writing to Fr. Ricaldone a few days after he concluded his extraordinary visit to the Far East, he told him:

> "Certainly we cannot forget that the Portuguese Mission helps us economically in a large scale, keeping the staff, seeing to the costs of [our work] and leaving a good margin. If abandoned completely the missions of the Patronage, we would be deprived of all these benefits".[50]

The last paragraph of this passage seems to imply that the Prefect General of the Congregation would be inclined to closing all the works of the Salesians regarding the Portuguese Patronage. Fortunately, such a measure did not occur.

9. The decision and its repercussions

Pietro Ricaldone, the consignee of the letter-report of Canazei about Timor (1 May 1928), answered in the name of the General Council on 2 August 1928, agreeing with his presented reasons regarding leaving Timor. The letter starts by resuming the report of Canazei:

> "Your thought is this: 'It is not possible to continue in the present conditions; thus, the religious spirit suffers and the work cannot develop. It is only possible to continue in Timor, if a mission area or territory, that multiplies the works and the staff, can be accepted. Since it is not possible to accept this proposal, closing the house would be a better option'".[51]

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[50] ASC F 156, letter *Canazei-Ricaldone*, Macau, 19.12.1927.
[51] ASC F 156, letter *Ricaldone-Canazei,* Turin, 2.8.1928.

And he introduced right after, the thought of the Superiors and added others to the ones indicated by Canazei, mainly the several missionary engagements with the Holy See, which absorbed all the available staff.

Regarding the whole, the following conclusion was made: "It is better to retire before assuming engagements we could not keep".[52] The assumed engagements to the great missions, to which all the staff was insufficient, would justify the closing of the small and "insignificant" mission in Timor. It seemed to us that we have a fact that can be explained, considering its own sensibility of the historic moment through which the Salesian Society went, in the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s. As a matter of fact, the Salesian Society then lived in a climate of intoxicating euphoria. Actually, it grew for every one to see, through out the several continents and was prepared to celebrate the beatification of the Founder.[53]

Furthermore, it felt highly prestigious with the attitude of the Holy See, when they were trusted with vast and important mission territory, mainly in Latin America, India and the Far East. Well, no one besides Fr. Ricaldone lived this moment of excitement more intensely. And it was precisely then, that he made, by order of the Superior General, his extraordinary visit to the missions in India and the Far East: a visit made throughout the whole of 1927.

To the eyes of the Prefect General, marveled by the reality and perspectives of the great missions in India and China, what meaning could have such meagre mission hidden in the Insulindia?[54] It is understandable, through this point of view, that the small mission in Timor had to be sacrificed in the name of more prestigious missions. Following, we shall see the repercussions of the decision taken by Turin.

We shall start by the reaction of the Salesians who worked on the scene and were disregarded in the process. In his extraordinary visit to the Portuguese Province in December 1935, Fr. Antonio Candela (member of the General Council) asked Fr. Erminio Rossetti a report on the circumstances of the first presence of the Salesians in Timor and on the hypothesis of restarting the interrupted missionary experience on that ter-

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[52] *Ibid.*

[53] The beatification of John Bosco would be in 1929 and his canonisation in 1934.

[54] It is interesting to note that, the thoughts of Ricaldone on Timor, were the same ones as Luigi Versiglia's on Macau, at least for a few years (from 1908 onwards). Afterwards (from 1912 onwards), this pessimist vision seemed to change.

ritory. The old Superior of the extinguished mission made a quite complete exposure, following a scheme previously presented to him.[55]

Regarding the motif or motives that led the Major Superiors to abandon Timor, Rossetti has only this bitter ease:

> "[Leaving Timor] was always something of unknown [to us]. In 1927, the Superior [Council] of Turin authorised the acceptance of the house of Dili and the Salesians went there. In December 1928 they received, all of a sudden as a lightning [improvviso come fulmine], the order to set aside the contract and to leave. This provoked displeasure and annoyance [in and out of the community], complaints and protests from the Bishop, the Governor and the missionaries in the island. However, the Salesians obeyed and in the Easter of 1929, abandoned Timor amongst tears of the students and the grief of friends and admirers".[56]

In his book L'opera Salesiana in China, Fr. Mario Rassiga wrote that Ignacio Canazei, on 18 March, "communicated to his Council that not only was he authorised to close the house of Timor, but was also ordered to do it. Naturally, this matter caused many astonished commentaries".[57]

Regarding the situation and conditions of the Salesians in the house of Timor, referred to as very badly by some of the responsible Salesians, especially by Fr. Ricaldone, the report of Rossetti in 1935 expresses itself in a non-sombre way:

> "[There was] plain freedom of action, having only to render account to the vicar [of the Bishop of Macau] once a year, about the financial situation of the school and the religious movement of the parish, since it depended on him. The authority, whether religious or civil, never interfered with the internal life of the Salesians and always shown itself more than respectful towards them and was always willing to favour them; and would be willing to accept any condition if they did not leave. The [Salesian] staff was paid in proportion to the number, not as much as the Government [paid] the missionaries of the Patronage, but more than sufficiently to cover all the expenses and to economise. The Salesians remained very little time in Timor to realise the inconvenience of the convention could cause. On the other hand, the ecclesiastic authority did everything in their power to satisfy the Salesians to the point, where they did not paid too much attention to the more arguable part of the convention".[58]

The testimony of Rossetti joins the one of Caravario:

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[55] *Note sul Vicariato di Timor* (Lisbon, 9.12.1935).
[56] ASC F 437, *Note sul Vicariato di Timor.*
[57] Part I, page 93.
[58] *Ibid.*

> "[Before leaving to Timor,] the hopes we had in Macau were a lot and many could have been realised, but the Superiors did not think the work should continue. The students [corresponded] and the work would be extremely useful to the colony, since there were no other native workers. The work for the four projected workshops would not lack and the school [with the right material] could live on its own.[59] United to the school, the parish would complete the work and would enlarge the field [of action]. With the fitting staff, the festive Oratory would have excellent results [...]. The work started to feel as if paralysed [little after it started], when, the Major Superiors decreed its closing, moved by the will of the Salesians to work in an independent territory [that is, independent from other entities]. Personally, I was very displeased, for I had before me a new and large field with the possibility to [successfully] exercise the firstlings of the sacerdotal ministry".[60]

The way these two Salesians talked of their brief missionary experience in the far flung Timor, was far from connecting to the petty terms, found in several other documents referring to the same geographical and human context.

Particularly shocked with the decision, the Bishop of Macau, José da Costa Nunes, manifested his grief as soon as he found out about the matter. In a letter directed to the Provincial Ignazio Canazei, with whom he had established the covenant, he underlines the imprecise way the responsible Salesians resolved the matter, setting at risk their own honour before the Portuguese Government, to which they had also assumed their compromises, counting with the loyal and lasting cooperation of the Salesians:

> "[With the authorisation to open the house of Timor, given by the Major Superiors] I had the right, I believe, to think that the compromise towards me could not easily be unmade [...]. In reality, it was because I believed the staying of the Salesians in Timor would last, that I unorganised that school, working in any condition, fired the masters and part of the students and made a few compromises with the Portuguese Government [...]. Will I now start the suspended work? How to justify myself before the Government of Timor? In which moral situation will the Prelate of Macau find itself, knowing of the efficiency [of the action of the Salesians], officially declaring that it would take charge in solving the problem of the professional schools in Timor?".[61]

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[59] This appreciation opposes the one from Canazei: "Here in Timor, the school of arts and crafts would not work out very well. Certainly, [the workshops] would always maintain very modest proportions. We only feel the need of limited number of joiners (or rather carpenters) and agriculturists or, more precisely, coffee, coconut and rice agriculturists" (letter-report *Canazei-Ricaldone*, Dili, 1.5.1928, pages 1-2).

[60] C. Caravario, *Diary*, pages 21-22.

[61] AIC, letter *Nunes-Canazei*, Macau, 23.9.1928.

Amongst those that grieved the departure of the Salesians from Timor, Rossetti mentioned Teófilo Duarte,[62] who was Governor of the territory at that time. He expresses his grief in the book he published in 1930, "Timor - Antecâmara do Inferno". In this book, he showers the Salesians and their teaching methods with compliments and at the same time, strangely pointing out the secular clergy as the reason for his departure: "It was a shame that the secular clergy did not think they were valuable help, but as undesired competition, thus forcing them to abandon the workshops they had built a year before".[63] Besides being poorly informed, the Governor shows the displeasure against the priests of the diocese.

Contrary to what T. Duarte says, they would always see the Salesians with good eyes and also condemned the departure of the Salesians from Timor, as Rossetti himself implicitly declared by including them in the expression "the missionaries of the island", since apart from the Salesians, the only missionaries in East Timor, at the time, were the secular priests and the Canossians. Furthermore: what Rossetti wrote to Fr. Ricaldone before leaving Timor, was the strongest contradiction of the accusations against the clergy of the island:

> "Throughout the last year, the rumour that the Salesians and the mission priests lived in conflict has been heard: it has been implied that the reason the Salesians were leaving was due to the intrigues of the abovementioned priests. [One or another problem that appeared was due only to certain imprudent positions taken by the Salesian Parish Priest António Carvalho]. Those of us working in [the school of] Dili [...] live in perfect harmony, not only with the ecclesiastic authority but also with each and every one of the fine Portuguese priests, working to properly serve the mission, for over more than twenty years".[64]

10. The retreat

After officially receiving the order of departure from Timor on November 1928, the Salesians missionaries could not do it immediately, since they had not enough money for the journeys, as Canazei says to Fr. Ricaldone: "The best would be to leave [Timor] as soon as possible. But

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[62] Teófilo Duarte was Governor of Timor between 1927 and 1928, exactly when the Salesians were also in the island.

[63] Teófilo Duarte, *Timor-Antecâmara do Inferno*. Famalicão, Tip. Moderna, 1930, page 373.

[64] ASC F 437, letter *Rossetti-Ricaldone*, Deli, 9.1.1929.

Fr. Rossetti as just wrote to me saying that it is not possible to leave the island due to lack of money. And I do not have it as well [...]. For that matter, it will be necessary to wait [a while longer]".[65] And they had to wait until the beginnings of April, as Calisto Caravario wrote in his diary: "After delaying the departure, at least five times, the day finally arrived".[66] The farewell was filled with emotion: "The boys accompanied us till we reached the ship and when the moment of the departure came, they started crying in such a way that we could only feel pity. One might think that under that semi-savage appearance, there was little sensibility but on the contrary delicate feeling emerged!".[67]

And by adding that "all were deeply sorry for our departure and that they hoped the Salesians would return to Timor", it seems to regard not only the boarding students but also the whole population of the town. It is actually what Erminio Rossetti clearly manifests: "...the Salesians [...] abandoned Timor amongst the tears of his students and the sorrow of their friends and admirers".[68]

As Erminio Rossetti himself said in the interview in 1962, "he thought to convince the authorities, the priests and the people" that the Salesians would later return to Timor and, as proof that they did not wish to break ties with the island, they had decided to take with them, to Turin, six young boys from Timor. These boys would continue their education and return someday to their people, prepared to give them qualified help and, who knows, even one of them as a Salesian!

Actually, the missionaries went on board the ship with the following young boys from Timor: António Custódio Carvalho, Carlos Marques, Faculto José Madeira, Joaquim Alves Pereira, Luís António Nunes, Manuel Freitas da Silva. Two of them, Carlos Marques and Joaquim Pereira, professed in the Salesian Society and became a carpenter and a tailor, respectively.

Yes, the Salesians returned to Timor, but only after the Second World War, in 1946 and this time the work of the Salesians would gain deep roots and would reach an unusual development, opposing the pessimistic prophecies of Canazei and Ricaldone.

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[65] ASC F 156, letter *Canazei-Ricaldone*, Hong-Kong, 16.10.1928.
[66] C. CARAVARIO, *Diary*, page 22.
[67] *Ibid.*, page 22.
[68] ASC F 437, *Note sul vicariato di Timor.*

Conclusion

It is quite curious that some of the reasons that originated the closing of the first Salesian work founded in Timor, were also invoked regarding the equally Salesian work in Macau and both integrated in the Portuguese Patronage on the East since 1906.

The way both Fr. Ricaldone and Canazei talked about the work in Timor, considering it meagre and with no future, fitted into a mediocre environment and dependance on the Patronage, coincided more or less with the terms used by Fr. Luigi Versiglia, Superior of the Orphanage "Imaculada Conceição" of Macau, while corresponding with the mother-house in Turin, from 1908 on. However, it is noticeable that a great difference regarding the way the Major Superiors acted in both cases.

Concerning Timor, the Superiors did not hesitate in regarding the contract established with the Bishop of the diocese about the field of work in Dili, as inexistent. Concerning Macau, before the insistence from Versiglia to draw the attention to what seemed to be an environment with no future and to the advantage of looking for another one with larger and safer perspectives, the Major Superiors thought it preferable to comply with the exact seven-year deadline of the contract. Behind the efforts of the General Council in moderating the emotional states of Versiglia, one can detect the prudent and pondered attitude of the blessed Superior General Miguel Rua with whom the process of accepting the aforesaid work actually started.

Irony of history! The two unappreciated mentioned environments, when the work of the Salesians gave its first steps, would become two of the most remarkable centres of projection of the Salesians in the Far East. The Orphanage "Imaculada Conceição", at first however, was modest an institution in Macau, became the mother-house of the Salesians in the Far East spreading the charisma of the Founder all around and to far lands. In moments of persecution in China, it also worked as a school of education (novices and students of philosophy and theology). Apart from the Orphanage "Imaculada Conceição", later turned into a Salesian Institute, other great schools would appear in Macau under the administration of the Salesians priests and sisters. After the territory returned to the Chinese administration, these schools continue presently, to develop their important educational role in favour of the local youth.

In Timor, after the return of the Salesians in 1946, the retaking of the activities retook a rhythm of development that, under certain aspects, is

even more meaningful than the case of Macau. It is enough to say that, nevertheless the tragic events that happened in the territory with the Indonesian invasion after the Second World War, today's picture (end of 2004) is the following: eight houses with great variety of activities; more than 70 native Salesians; a Bishop, Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo, Nobel Prize and presently, missionary in Mozambique together with two more compatriots, also Salesians, and 15 novices. This reality has allowed the constitution of a "Visitatoria" or quasi-province (1998), including the Salesians of big Indonesia, whose number is, however, inferior to the natives of small East Timor.

We could still add the case of Goa. Here, some of the Italian Salesians – expelled from India after the Second World War and sheltered by the local Bishop, José da Costa Nunes (transferred from Macau to Goa) in 1946 – started a work, whose development, recently translated into the creation of a quasi-province.

The process of the Salesian work in Timor, as well as in Macau and Goa, leads us spontaneously to think about the evangelic image of the little grain of mustard, which germinated and transformed into a dense plant.

SALESIANS IN THE PHILIPPINES (1949-1963): HISTORICAL NOTES

*Nestor Impelido SDB**

1. Introduction

The aim of the Seminar is to present the beginnings of the Salesian Presence in East Asia and Oceania. The Philippines, as part of this Salesian Region, has also its beginnings and origins from the first Salesian Presence in East Asia: China. For in the two times that the Salesians started to root themselves in the Philippines, they came from China to negotiate and to concretise what they negotiated.

For this, I wish to present certain notes of the history of the Salesian Presence in the Philippines. These historical notes could help us reflect in our on-going Salesian history. For what might be a record and event of the past continues to question us of our current doing.

The points I treat have been chosen among many aspects of the Salesian beginnings in the Philippines. They are documented as well. I consider them relevant to the study of the Salesians' history in my country. These notes, which might not be unique, might also be shared by the other Salesian presences in Asia and elsewhere.

I limit my study of the Salesian beginnings in the Philippines from the moment of the negotiation by Turin with Manila so that the Salesians come, to the actual start of the Salesian work until the creation of the Salesian Philippine Province: hence, from 1949 to 1963 ca. Our notes of history include the following: (1) the negotiations for foundations; (2) the first works started by the Salesians.

The method I used is historical. That is, I based my research on documents that are mostly archival. Then, I tried to expose the results of the research, while explaining and clarifying the more significant elements of the exposition. Finally, I made an effort to be critical and analytical, by going to the historical significance of the notes presented.

* Fr. Nestor Impelido is a member of the Salesian Historical Institute in Rome, Italy and professor of Church History at the Don Bosco Center of Studies in Manila, Philippines.

2. Situation

In the second and third quarters of the 1900's, period of the establishment of the Salesians in the Philippines, we find the canonization of two influential saints of the Salesian Family: that of Maria Domenica Mazzarello (24 June 1951) and of the boy-saint Domenico Savio (12 June 1954). The Salesian Society itself underwent several "traumatic events": the martyrdom (25 February 1930) of Bishop Luigi Versiglia (1873-1930) and Fr. Callisto Caravario (1903-1930); the massacre of clergy and religious which included Salesians in the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939); the persecution, imprisonment and forced migration of Salesians from Czechoslovakia (April 1950), Lithuania, Hungary on account of the Communist persecution of religion. This last was also the experience of the Salesians in China (March 1950).[1]

In the same period, the Salesian Society had re-launched its missionary thrust after a lapse of almost eight years, on account of the Second World War. Fr. Carlo Braga (1889-1971), as Provincial of China and then as Visitatore of the Philippines, twice preached in 1952 and 1961 in the celebrative send-off to new Salesian missionaries in Turin. Moreover, the Salesians have already begun to work in almost twelve nations in East Asia (Macao [1906], China [1910], Japan [1926], Hong Kong, Thailand and Timor [1927], Myanmar [1938], Laos and Vietnam [1941], Philippines and Taiwan [1951], South Korea [1954], and much later Indonesia [1985]).

In East Asia, we find the establishment of four Religious Institutes founded by Salesians: the Sisters Announcers of the Lord (12 December 1936, China, by Msgr. Luigi Versiglia), the Caritas Sisters of Miyazaki (15 August 1937, Japan, by Fr. Vincenzo Cimatti and Fr. Antonio Cavoli), the Sisters Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (7 December 1937, Thailand, by Msgr. Gaetano Pasotti), and the Daughters of the Queenship of Mary Immaculate (3 December 1954, Thailand, by Fr. Carlo Della Torre).[2]

We have a transition in the leadership of the Salesian Society, with the death of Fr. Pietro Ricaldone (+25 November 1951) and with the election of Fr. Renato Ziggiotti (1 August 1952, General Chapter XVII). The former, during the rectorship of Fr. Filippo Rinaldi (1856-1922), made an extraordinary visitation of East Asia (1926-1927) where he visited Japan,

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[1] Cf Morand WIRTH, *Da Don Bosco ai nostri giorni. Tra storia e nuove sfide (1815-2000).* Roma 2000, pp. 391-393.

[2] *The Salesian Family of Don Bosco.* Roma 2000, pp. 195-198.

Thailand, Burma and China. Death would catch up with him even before the negotiations for the coming of the Salesians to the Philippines were finalized. Nonetheless, he was not one who was ignorant of the Philippines. He had been in Manila in October 1927, as guest of the Apostolic Delegate to the Philippines.[3] His successor, Fr. Renato Ziggiotti, definitely did not have much idea on the Philippines. But it was this latter who made the final decision for the Salesians to go to the Philippines. Later, he would visit the Philippines in April 1955, as Rector Major.

When the Philippines began as a Delegation dependent on the China Province in 1951, there were an estimated 15,182 Salesians, 1,182 novices and 1,076 houses. In 1963, when the Philippine Delegation became independent as a Province, there were about 20,562 Salesians, 1,285 novices and 1,327 houses in the world.

Upon the arrival of the Salesians in the Philippines in 1951, there was the on-going growing influence of Protestantism (Methodists, Presbyterians, Anglicans, Evangelicals, Adventists, etc.) brought about by American colonialism. Moreover, the local religious sects (Aglipay and Iglesia ni Kristo) were ever more active in the work of proselytism. There were new male Religious Orders (CICM, MSC, OSB, La Salle) at work, beside the traditional ones (OSA, OFM, SJ, OP, OSAR).[4] They came to help in the maintenance of the faith in the Philippines, as well as to help stem the "transfer" of Catholics to Protestantism, the same urgent reason which Fr. Braga claimed why the Salesians should come to the Philippines. They worked mostly for the education of the very young population of the country. The majority, however, schooled the paying sector. Private education, whose cost was definitely high, was in fact controlled

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[3] From Macao, Fr. Ricaldone made a two-day visit to Manila in the Philippines, from 6 to 7 October 1927. He was received by the Apostolic Delegate to the Philippines, Archbishop Guglielmo Piani, Fr. Louis La Ravoire Morrow and Br. Giovanni Castelli, all three Salesians. Fr. Ricaldone and Abp. Piani already had met once in Mexico, in 1913. The purpose of Fr. Ricaldone's visit to Manila was to see a Church (Binondo?), which was being offered to the Salesians. He also made contact with the Benedictines, Jesuits and Dominicans, and saw the Cathedral of Manila where he witnessed how the devotion to Mary Help of Christians was practised. Cf Francesco RASTELLO, *Don Pietro Ricaldone. IV successore di Don Bosco*, I. Roma 1976, pp. 419-420.

[4] Earlier, Rome had appealed to Religious Orders to reinforce the Philippine Church, which was under attack. Pope Pius XI exhorted Religious not only to work for education, the establishment of religious communities, but especially the cultivation of local vocations ("Rerum Ecclesiae", 28 February 1926). Cf Hubert JEDIN (ed.), *Storia della Chiesa*, X/1. Milano 1975, pp. 300-303.

by these good-intentioned religious. Some of them, though, worked in mission areas, something that the Salesians never dared to venture in the Philippines.

The Philippine Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Guglielmo Piani (1875-1956), who was a Salesian, had been recently transferred to Mexico in 1949. It was said that he had influenced greatly the development of the Philippine Church in the latter part of the first half of the 20th century.[5] His stint as papal representative in the Philippines could not but help the Salesians be positively looked upon during the negotiations for their coming and in their actual arrival.[6] Nonetheless, Archbishop Piani's successor, Archbishop Egidio Vagnozzi, definitely favoured and personally intervened, in order that the sons of Don Bosco be in the Philippines.

It was a post-war situation when the Salesians came to the Philippines. Both the Japanese invasion and occupation and the American liberation of the Philippines had resulted into widespread destruction. The Philippines had recently received its "independence" from the Americans (1945); but it was in a moment of transition from a government still tutored by the U.S.A.

There, too, was a wide discrepancy between the rich and the poor in a country that was largely agricultural. The government continued to favour the big landowners at the expense of the landless poor. The Communist threat in the Archipelago was real, on account of the gross social inequality. At the same time, the country was striving to keep in tune with the growing industrialization in the Asian region. The economic powers, in search of new grounds to sustain their economic needs, saw the Philippines as capable of sharing their industrial efficacy, in as much as it was adequately western and updated with its abilities.[7] The Philippines needed technical workers. The Salesians were prepared to make the young Filipino technically capable and who needed to prepare themselves to work

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[5] Gioventù Missionaria (Settembre 1948) 11: "L'Eccellentissimo Arcivescovo lavora al servizio della Chiesa in quelle 7,000 isole che, su un territorio vasto quanto l'Italia conta fra i 19,000,000 di abitanti, oltre 15,000,000 di cattolici. In 26 anni di zelante ministero S. E. ha avuto la gioia di vedere quasi raddoppiate le Diocesi, ora in numero di 15: mentre due nuove Prefetture Apostoliche, con un'altra eretta in precedenza, curano l'evangelizzazione di 712,579 pagani".

[6] Cf Francisco Castellanos, *Un Gran Corazon. Mons. Guillermo Piani.* Mexico 1991; Daniel Zurita, *Mons. Guillermo Piani, Salesiano, Formador, Superior, Delegato Apostolico.* México 2002.

[7] Cf Rosario M. Cortes – Celestina P. Boncan – Ricardo T. Jose, *The Filipino Saga. History as Social Change.* Quezon City 2000.

in the factories. Even the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines showed sensitiveness and concern to the plight of the poor, especially of the young. For this, they welcomed any help, including the Salesians', which could answer their concern.

Manila had its first Filipino Archbishop in Gabriel Reyes. The Manila Council (7 to 25 January 1953) helped to give a clearer direction to the Philippine Church in the capital. The establishment of the "Mission Society of the Philippines" (1964) declared the special missionary vocation of the Filipino Clergy.[8] But the Church also showed a particular attention to the Chinese who had also migrated to the Philippines on account of the Communist persecution. Of 129 seminarians who escaped from China, 113 were ordained priests, of which 66 remained to minister to their co-nationals. Even schools and parishes were established for their care.[9]

In China, in July 1950, the Communists, who would later create a National Church that effectively resulted into schism from Rome, had started to take over and suppress the Chinese Church that was growing. This meant the expulsion of foreign missionaries too, after mock trials and imprisonment.[10]

In the Salesian China Province in 1949, the superior was Fr. Carlo Braga who had been at the helm of the province for the past twenty years.[11] He was often "in giro", visiting the presences in his tested province, even for a considerable length of time, so that documents took time to be gathered.[12] By 1952, Salesian houses began to closed in Peking, Shanghai, Kun Ming.[13] This forfeiture of the Salesian work included that of the diocese of Shiu Chow. At the same time, the Salesian presences in Hong Kong and Macao were threatened in case that the conflict between the Nationalists and the Communists spilled over these Islands.

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[8] Cf M. G. ALINEA SJ, *Philippine Role in the Far East*, in «Worldmission» 13 (1962) 2.

[9] F. BURKHARDT SJ., *Kirche und Chinesen auf den Philippinen*, in «Die Katholischn Missionen» 78 (1959) 108-111; *ibid.*, 72 (1953) 49.

[10] Cf Hubert JEDIN (ed.), *Storia della Chiesa*, X/2. Milano 1980, pp. 720-723. Cf also *ibid.*, XXIV. Milano 1988, pp. 328-346.

[11] Archivio Salesian Centrale (= ASC) F 157 Cina: Corrispondenza (Acquistapace a V. Ricaldone, Shanghai, 5 ottobre 1946) 2. Fr. Acquistapace wrote of Fr. Braga: "Certo non sarà facile trovare un altro d. Braga dallo spirito salesiano al cento per cento, dal cuore grande di amore per la Cina e ricco di esperienza, dalle vedute larghe, dal coraggio intrepido quando si tratta di una opera della gloria di Dio, e dalle conoscenze ed aderenze in tutti gli strati sociali cinesi ed europei soprattutto delle altre famiglie religiose".

[12] ASC F 157 Cina: Corrispondenza (Benato a Puddu, Macao, 9 giugno 1946).

[13] Cf *Elenco Generale della Società di San Francesco di Sales*, 1952-1955.

The Salesians who faced the Communists tried their best to cope up with the situation. At the end, they had to go. They were harassed and dejected. The China Province tried to adapt to the new situation. The presence in Hong Kong was reinforced. Confreres were shuffled. Others were allowed to go for vacation. And when they came back, some of them were deviated to the Philippines, considered as their "sfogo" and "rifugio provvidenziale".

3. Negotiations

3.1. *Turin's initiative*

The Salesians came to the Philippines after a series of negotiations between the Philippines and Italy via China. Manila went to Turin to make two concrete offers to the Rector Major so that the Salesians could come to the Philippines. Turin, in turn, asked Hong Kong-Macao to see the feasibility of the offers and to negotiate with Manila.

On account of these seemingly serious and concrete proposals, Fr. Pietro Ricaldone (1870-1951), Superior General, wrote to Fr. Braga, Provincial of the China Province, in 18 November 1949. He asked him to go to Manila and to see for himself the two offers extended to the Salesians.[14] Fr. Modesto Bellido (1902-1993), in-charge of the Salesian missions, who earlier had visited Manila and had met the Apostolic Nuncio of Manila, had, in fact, suggested to Fr. Ricaldone to send someone to survey the possibilities for the Salesians to come to the Philippines. He sincerely believed that a foundation in the Philippines was now "possibile e molto conveniente".[15]

The order of Fr. Ricaldone to Fr. Braga to go to Manila, though, was accompanied by a certain reminder which also served as timely advice: that Fr. Braga should not make any commitment with anyone, and that he should bring the plans of the Salesian School of Aberdeen and present this to the persons who had offered to build a technical school for the Salesians to administer in their sugar refinery in Victorias, Negros Occidental. This initiative of an "Escuela de Artes y Oficios" had been en-

[14] Salesian Archives Hong Kong (= SAHK) Filippine (Ricaldone a Braga, Torino, 18 novembre 1949).

[15] ASC F 157 Cina: Corrispondenza (Bellido a Ricaldone, Hong Kong, 3 dicembre 1949).

dorsed by the Bishop of Bacolod, who had written to Turin.[16] Moreover, the coming of the Salesians was strongly recommended by no other than the Apostolic Delegate to the Philippines.[17]

Fr. Braga quickly moved after receiving Fr. Ricaldone's order. He wrote the Provincial Secretary, Fr. Clemente Benato (1892-1959), to send him the names and addresses of the bishops who called for the Salesians, so that he could inform them of his coming.[18] Moreover, he also wrote Archbishop Piani, currently Apostolic Delegate in Mexico, who did not fail to give him the advise that was asked from him: that the Salesians should first establish themselves in the capital of the Philippines for a practical purpose (the Salesians, instead, would start in a province north of Manila); that they should show special concern for the Salesian Oratory which ought to be the heart of their apostolate (the Oratory would become a tradition mainly in the house of Mandaluyong); that they should not be tied up to boards of trustees nor committees nor to bishops, so that they may be free to go about their work; finally, that Fr. Braga should not be afraid "to mention his name" when he negotiated with the bishops.[19]

3.2. *Braga's visits*

On 26 February 1950, Fr. Braga left Hong Kong and arrived in Manila the next day. This he did, after he had written to Fr. Bellido earlier, informing him that he had plans to make a "scappata" to Italy immediately after his Manila visit in order to inform the superiors of Turin regarding the agreements from his Manila visit.[20] This was Fr. Braga. He had not yet gone to Manila, and he had already made arrangements to go to Turin. He did not know yet the terms of the negotiations, and he had already agreements "raggiunti" to discuss with the Superiors.

On 7 June 1950, Fr. Braga reported his first Philippine visit directly to the General Council in Turin. He did not only see the two requests received by Turin: that of a trade school in Negros Occidental, and that of a center for street children and orphans in Cebu. He also entertained other offers to the Salesians: an academy school in Tarlac; two schools in the

[16] SAHK Filippine (Ricaldone a Lladoc, Torino, 18 novembre 1949).
[17] *Ibid.* (Ricaldone a Vagnozzi, Torino, 18 novembre 1949).
[18] *Ibid.* (Braga a Benato, Macao, 9 gennaio 1950).
[19] *Ibid.* (Piani a Braga, Mexico, 19 febbraio 1950).
[20] SAHK Filippine (Braga a Bellido, Hong Kong, 6 febbraio 1950).

Island of IloIlo; a school and a minor seminary in Batangas; an unspecified offer in Manila. In summary: eight offers (five schools, a boys' center, a minor seminary, plus an unnamed one), in six provinces (Tarlac, Manila, Negros Occidental, Cebu, Batangas, Iloilo), in four islands (Luzon, Cebu, Negros and Panay), endorsed by six bishops (Gabriel Reyes of Manila, Julio Rosales of Cebu, Cesar Guerrero of San Fernando, Rufino Santos of Lipa, Casimiro Lladoc of Bacolod, Jose Cuenco of Iloilo).[21]

Of these offers, those who followed up their requests for foundations were Tarlac, Cebu and Lipa. The negotiation for Victorias was stalled in as much as the main negotiator was still in the U.S.A.[22] There were no contracts elaborated and final agreements made between Fr. Braga and those who offered foundations. But it seemed that Fr. Braga had promised to Archbishop Vagnozzi that the Salesians would already come to take over the school in Tarlac for that coming school year 1950.[23] However, the Salesians did not come, to the embarrassment and delusion of the Apostolic Delegate and the priest who offered the school.

Fr. Braga, after having informed the Apostolic Delegate of his coming,[24] was back in Manila for a second visit on 20 February 1951. Fr. Ziggiotti, then Prefect General, had written him on 11 January 1951, telling him to visit the Philippines once more to do a quick "sopraluogo" of the requests, "to force those cooperators and admirers of the Salesians" really make concrete offers and give the Salesians a free hand in what they offered, to concentrate his efforts on "una buona proposta" and not on projects difficult to realize, and "far fuoco con la poca legna che abbiamo in Manila".[25] But again, he gave another warning to Fr. Braga: there was a restricted number of Salesians available to send to the Philippines. Thus, Fr. Braga should not pretend to accept a number of offers.

Indeed, Fr. Braga directed his attention to the request extended from Victorias as the most possible of the offers. But he had also asked Archbishop Vagnozzi to present him other offers to make the most of his visit in the Philippines.[26] For this, he was yet offered another school in the north of the Philippines, in the Mountain Province. But one offer that the Archbishop insisted that the Salesians should immediately take over was

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[21] ASC F 164 Filippine (Braga al Concilio Superiore, maggio 1950).
[22] SAHK Filippine (Braga, Pro Memoria [1950]).
[23] *Ibid.* (Vagnozzi a Braga, Manila, 30 settembre 1950).
[24] *Ibid.* (Benato a Vagnozzi, Hong Kong, 12 febbraio 1951).
[25] ASC F 157 Cina: Corrispondenza (Ziggiotti a Braga, Torino, 11 gennaio 1951).
[26] SAHK Filippine (Benato a Vagnozzi, Hong Kong, 12 febbraio 1951).

the school in Tarlac. For he was not pleased that the Salesians had not kept their promise to send personnel soon.[27]

3.3. *Braga's recommendations*

Fr. Braga's account of his two visits to Turin came in word and in writing. In the form of recommendations, he noted the following to the Superiors in Turin. The Salesians should accept the offer of a school in Victorias, because it was most in need of Salesians, and because the conditions offered by the donors were good.[28] Nonetheless, he suggested that the Salesians start first in Tarlac where they were already awaited since the opening of the school year. The offer of Cebu was decisive, since those who requested the Salesians had already started to construct for the Salesians. Later, the offer of Lipa ought to be reckoned with.[29]

Furthermore, Fr. Braga suggested Turin several other things. The works to be accepted by the Salesians should be scattered as much as possible in the different provinces of the Archipelago. Then, they should insist to having a parish, so that they could have a source of income. But also, the Salesians should found a "rest house", where they could go in the course of their future apostolate in the Philippines.[30]

At first, Fr. Braga told Fr. Ziggiotti that the Salesians should insist on those who requested their coming that they be helped financially in the beginning.[31] He, however, immediately changed his mind on this regard. The Salesians should not show themselves preoccupied with money, for two reasons. The religious in the Philippines were known to be moneyed because of their exclusive schools. Besides, the Filipino Catholics, according to him, were generous "quando vedono che si lavora seriamente per le anime".[32]

Fr. Braga recommended to the Rector Major to immediately send personnel: one for Victorias, in order to supervise the construction of the

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[27] *Ibid.* (Vagnozzi a Braga, Manila, 24 aprile 1951).

[28] ASC F 158 Cina (Braga: Relazione Annuale [marzo-aprile 1951]).

[29] *Ibid.*, Cina: Corrispondenza (Braga a Ziggiotti, Hong Kong, 12 aprile 1951). He would later recommend to Fr. Bellido to accept the offer of the bishop of Lipa. Cf SAHK Corrispondenza (Braga a Bellido, Hong Kong, 30 luglio 1951).

[30] ASC F158 Cina (Braga: Relazione Annuale [marzo-aprile 1951]).

[31] *Ibid.* (Braga a Ziggiotti, Hong Kong, 12 aprile 1951).

[32] SAHK Corrispondenza (Braga a Giraudi, Hong Kong, 17 novembre 1951).

school intended by the owners; another for the school in Tarlac, before the opening of the school year of June 1951. But who, according to him, ought to be sent to the Philippines? Preferably, European Salesians who had been moved out from China, should be asked to go; not the Chinese, since the Communists were active in the Philippines, where there was also a growing sense of nationalism.[33] Moreover, the Superiors should send confreres belonging to other Salesian provinces.[34]

Fr. Braga, though, insisted on one particular thing regarding the personnel to be sent to the Philippines. Turin should send English-speaking confreres as "conditio sine qua non", even if they, too, would have to learn the languages of the country. Why? Because the Salesians in the Philippines were to educate and were to run schools. And the schools of the religious were known for their facility with the English language. Now, Fr. Braga remarked: "non possiamo presentarci come dei minorati per l'impossibilità di avere l'inglese in bocca".[35] The Superiors had to look for these English-speaking confreres, Fr. Braga admitted, since there were not so many in the China Province who met this requirement.

Fr. Braga did not have to wait long for Turin's answer. It came promptly after a meeting of the General Council of 30 May 1951. Tarlac was approved, and they were happy about this; in fact, Fr. Braga could sign the contract. Cebu was also approved; Fr. Braga should negotiate for the formulation of a contract and should think of the confreres to send. And Victorias? Fr. Braga had already thought of sending the Salesian Guido D'Amore. However, Turin did not promise to find and send confreres who spoke English, for it foresaw that it would be difficult to encounter confreres of this capacity.[36] Finally, it had chosen the Salesian who would be delegate of the provincial for the Philippines, Fr. Luigi Ferrari.[37]

4. First foundations regularly established

The Salesians could not but begin with the offers that they received, as recommended and approved by the Superiors who were in Turin. Fr. Braga was only too quick to take the opportunities and to turn them to the advantage of the Salesians.

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[33] *Ibid.* (Braga a Bellido, Hong Kong, 30 luglio 1951).
[34] ASC F 157 Cina: Corrispondenza (Braga Ziggiotti, Hong Kong, 12 aprile 1951).
[35] *Ibid.*
[36] ASC F 158 Cina: corrispondenza (Ziggiotti as Braga, Torino, 30 maggio 1951).
[37] SAHK Corrispondenza (Braga a Kreutzer, Hong Kong, 28 maggio 1951).

There was already the school in Tarlac, which had asked specifically for them. This was indeed for boys, in a province still in its development. Victorias was not something to be disregarded, since the conditions were so favourable to the Salesians. Besides, those who initiated the offer, lay people though they might have been, were truly imbued by a deep and authentic sense of faith. Cebu, instead, was the nearest to the desire of Don Bosco. Besides, it fitted well to balance the first two foundations.

4.1. *Don Bosco Tarlac: "School made by America"*

In spite of the recommendation of Archbishop Piani to Fr. Braga, the Salesians did not start in Manila after all. Instead, they began in the province of Tarlac, about three hours from Manila, with a school "made by America".

St. John Bosco Academy in the province of Tarlac was founded by Fr. James Wilson,[38] an American army chaplain who came to the Philippines in 1945. He had asked his Ordinary, Francis Cardinal Spellman of New York, for some years of leave so that he could start in the Tarlac town a boys' school. The Holy Spirit Sisters had suggested him this initiative, since they did not have a school where to send their elementary male graduates. With the permission of Archbishop Michael O'Doherty, American Archbishop of Manila, he rented a hotel building on 20 June 1947 and there began a high school.[39] He had asked Fr. William Mahoney,[40] another former American army chaplain, to help him; the latter took over the spiritual direction of the school, the religion classes and the sports activities.

Fr. Wilson, however, sought for a more permanent home for St. John Bosco Academy. Archbishop O'Doherty had, in fact, already approved his request for the construction of a building in the new site that he had

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[38] Fr. James Wilson was born in New York, U.S.A., on 4 March 1916. He was ordained a priest in 1942 at the age of 26. In 1945, he joined the U.S. army chaplain. In August of the same year, he came to the Philippines. In 1946, he came to Tarlac where he saw the need of a Catholic school for boys. Cf Salesian Archives Filippine–Tarlac (= SAFIN Tarlac), The Silver Bosconian (Souvenir Book, 4 February 1973), 6.

[39] Classes started in 6 July 1947 with 86 enrolees: 45 in 1st year, 22 in 2nd year, 15 in 3rd year and 4 in 4th year. Cf SAFIN Tarlac (Ad Lumen, Don Bosco Academy Yearbook, 1952) 2.

[40] Fr. William Mahoney was described as "the gentle giant" because of his height. He left the school on 22 July to become parish priest of the town of Ramos, in the same province of Tarlac.

recently acquired.[41] By October 1948, Fr. Wilson had transferred his school to its final location, even if he had to continue the construction of the school buildings through the help of his American and Filipino benefactors. But Fr. Wilson was not destined to stay there for long. By July 1951, it had been announced that the Salesians were coming to take over the school.[42]

Cardinal Spellman had recalled Fr. Wilson back to New York. But the latter did not plan to leave the school which he had established unattended. Besides, he had still a mortgage to pay for the purchase of the land where the school stood. He wanted to give the school to a religious teaching society, which was also capable of meeting the financial obligations and improvements much needed by a growing educational institute. He had consulted Bishop Cesar Guerrero and had asked him to help persuade the Salesians to come to his aid. The fact was that he had hoped that St. John Bosco would work this miracle for him.[43]

Fr. Wilson had also recruited the help of Fr. Charles McManus, a classmate of him based in New York. The latter had already written on 31 January 1950 to Fr. Ernesto Giovannini (1904-1993), superior of the Salesian U.S.A. East Province, asking him, if he was ready to assume a school "which bears their founder's name".[44] Fr. Giovannini took interest of the offer and, in fact, asked for further information, so that he could present the proposal to the superiors in Turin for their information and possible decision.[45] Fr. Wilson did not waste time in answering this request.[46] His letter to the Salesian provincial was forwarded by the provincial secretary to Fr. Giovannini who, meanwhile, had left for Turin.[47] With this, the "fate" of St. John Bosco Academy fell in the hands of another American who was now in Turin and who could in fact directly

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[41] SAFIN Tarlac: Correspondence (O'Doherty to Wilson, Manila, 27 January 1948). Fr. Wilson had bought a 17,784 sq.m. terrain in barrio Santo Cristo of the same town for the price of Php29,568 from a certain Servillano Aquino. Payment was shared by Archbishop O'Doherty, Fr. Wilson and Bishop Cesar Guerrero of San Fernando. SAFIN Tarlac Correspondence (Wilson to Guanlao, Tarlac, 19 November 1949).

[42] SAFIN Tarlac School Annual (1951).

[43] SAFIN Tarlac Correspondence (Wilson to Guanlao, Tarlac, 19 November 1949): "To hope for a miracle from Don Bosco is not too far fetched. He has already done marvels here. In any case we can at least expect him to help us to help ourselves".

[44] SAFIN Tarlac: Correspondence (McManus to Giovannini, New York, 31 January 1950).

[45] *Ibid.* (Giovannini to McManus, New York, 2 February 1950).

[46] *Ibid.* (Wilson to Giovannini, Tarlac, 14 February 1950).

[47] *Ibid.* (Kelley to Wilson, New Rochelle, 23 February 1950).

negotiate for its favour. No one noticed, though, that at the same time, Fr. Braga was already in Manila, surveying the possibility of the Salesians working in the Philippines!

By 4 May 1951, Fr. Wilson had furnished a contract for the cession of the school to the Salesians,[48] as requested by Fr. Braga,[49] who in turn had endorsed the document to Turin.[50] Fr. Wilson had expressed his optimism to his superior in New York that St. John Bosco Academy would now become financially viable and self-supporting, with the Salesians taking over.[51] On 16 July 1951, Fr. Braga informed him that Fr. Anthony di Falco (1914-2003), Salesian of the U.S.A. West Province, was coming soon.[52] St. John Bosco did not fail Fr. Wilson with the miracle that he had asked the Saint!

4.2. *Don Bosco Victorias: A layman's vision of social justice*

The school in Victorias was an offer of a father and his son who were both God-fearing, and who wanted to apply the social teachings of the Church contained in the papal encyclicals in their own life as industrialists.[53]

Don Miguel Ossorio and his son Frederic owned a sugar milling company which was organized according to the American style: "a big park, English meadows, gracious cemented villas which served as offices, as residence for the managers....".[54] Their offer of a high school for boys

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[48] ASC F 570 Filippine-Tarlac: Corrispondenza (Wilson to Braga, Tarlac, 4 May 1951).

[49] SAFIN Tarlac: Correspondence (Braga to Wilson, Hong Kong, 4 February 1951).

[50] *Ibid.* (Braga to Wilson, Hong Kong, 19 May 1951).

[51] *Ibid.* (Wilson to Spellman, Tarlac, 26 May 1951).

[52] *Ibid.* (Braga to Wilson, Hong Kong, 16 July 1951).

[53] To note the chapel of the Sugar Mill that was constructed by the owners: its design reflected the concern and sensitivity of the owners to the Church's teachings regarding the social question. Cf ASC F 622 Filippine: Bacolod-Victorias: Correspondence (Monchiero to Ziggiotti, Victorias, 7 March 1952) v.

[54] ASC F 622 Filippine-Bacolod: Corrispondenza (Monchiero a Ziggiotti, Victorias, 7 marzo 1952): "In fact, the technical personnel of the Company was international. They lived in two-story houses, with their servants, garden, refrigerators, telephone, etc. ... modern and well-equipped. Food, travels, laundry were reimbursed by the Company. The monthly pay ranged from Php250 to Php100.... After six years of work, the Company paid the expenses of a six-month vacation, which could be in any part of the world. The houses of the workers were in cement. They had free water and light. The life provisions (food provisions/supplies) were at a reduced price in determined shops. There were 400 kilometers of railways, and 25 locomotives for transportation." Cf *ibid.*

was a mere part of their vision of an educational program. Their desire was to create a "family view", which should guide the life within the community and those responsible for the sugar central. Workers and management ought to form a whole community unto themselves, in which "the real union was not a labour union, but a Christian and community union".[55]

Fr. Braga, who must have thought that he had understood the mind of the Ossorios, dared to declare that he planned to make the island where the future Salesian work would be located as "the capital of Catholic Action" of the Philippines. With this in mind, the plans that he had accorded with the Ossorios began to mushroom, at the expense of Victorias Milling Company (Vicmico), the sugar mill owned by his benefactors. He now asked for more buildings: a theatre able to seat 1,000; another building which can contain 500 boys; another to board 150 boys.[56]

The impression of the Ossorios, however, was that the Salesians were lost in a fever of school ambition! They were focused on "the boys" and the community life of the school. Instead, Frederick Ossorio, saw the whole Church to work for, not merely a sector of it. And his main reference was to love God and seek His will. This last, he seemed never to have heard from the Salesians.[57] Nonetheless, good men as the Ossorios' were, they continued to put their trust on the Salesians.

Don Bosco Victorias was also a school in which the Ossorios, not Fr. Braga, insisted that there be a written contract. Even before, they had encouraged the Salesians come up with a statement of intention and moral commitment. Earlier, Turin had insisted that there should be contract between the Salesians and those who asked the Salesians to establish a particular work before the Salesians accepted the offer. In the case of Victorias, the Ossorios had now insisted on a written contract, if only to clarify the question of the financing of the school.[58] The truth, was that, the Salesians were beginning to ask too much.

This was the clear offer by Miguel Ossorio, who had earlier sent his manager, Don Claudio Luzuriaga, who personally went to Hong Kong to see the Salesian School of Aberdeen, "to visit technical centers in Asia in search of special technicians to help establish a technical school to de-

[55] SAFIN Victorias: Correspondence (Frederic O. to Braga, Victorias, 5 December 1950).
[56] *Ibid.* (Miguel O. to Frederic O., Greenwich, Connecticut, 30 July 1951).
[57] *Ibid.* (Frederic O. to Miguel O., Victorias, 7 August 1951) 2.
[58] *Ibid.* (Frederic O. to Miguel O., Victorias, 7 August 1951) 2; *ibid.,* (Miguel O. to Frederic O., Greenwich, Connecticut, 30 July 1951).

velop idle boys in the plantation into valuable workers in the future":[59] he was willing to contribute for the expenses of a Trade School according to what may be needed for the community of Vicmico.[60] His Company was obliged to provide the Salesians the following: (a) monthly salary of Php100 per Salesian; (b) board and lodging and domestic helpers gratis; (c) construction of buildings needed for a Vocational Trade School which should be ready by May or early June 1952.[61]

On the other hand, the Salesians would operate a vocational trade school inside the premises of Vicmico, so as to teach the trades of mechanics including metal work, machine shop and foundry, electricity and carpentry, as well as the minor trades of shoe-making and tailoring. Its students would be primarily the sons of the employees of Vicmico. The school's size would be according to the buildings provided by the Company; its teaching staff would be members of the Salesian Society.[62]

Obviously, this was an offer that the Salesians could not resist. It was all to their advantage. A school was going to be constructed for them; and then they were going to be financially sustained by their benefactor. Thus began the Salesian School of Victorias, "the real first technical school".[63] Frederic Ossorio would state: "This is a work not only for the Company but also for God, and it has a life not only in conjunction with the Company but on its own".[64] It was personally visited by the President of the Philippines, who remarked that this was the kind of schools that the Philippines needed.[65] Don Bosco Victorias, indeed, was a school that outlasted the Company.[66]

In the mind of Fr. Braga, the Salesian house of Victorias was the work which opened the doors to the Salesians and which had facilitated all the rest. It helped financially; it had a name of its own. For this, it had to be taken cared of more.[67] One of Vicmico's managers dared to remark: "The Don Bosco Technical Institute being one of the best if not the best equipped trade school in the Far East, is, and will be playing a very important role in training and building up skilled labor so important for the

[59] *Ibid.* (A brief history of Don Bosco Victorias) 1.
[60] *Ibid.* (Miguel O. To Frederic O., Greenwich, Connecticut, 30 July 1951).
[61] *Ibid.* (Frederic O. to Braga, Greenwich, Connecticut, 26 September 1951).
[62] *Ibid.*
[63] *Ibid.* (Questionario per le scuole professionali, 1953-1954).
[64] *Ibid.* (Frederic O. to Miguel O., Victorias, 7 August 1951).
[65] Bollettino Salesiano 85 (aprile 1961) 131.
[66] SAFIN Victorias: Correspondence (Frederic O. to Miguel O., Victorias, 7 August 1951).
[67] ASC F 163 Filippine: Corrispondenza (Braga a Ziggiotti, Tarlac, 9 febbrario 1960).

industrialization of the country".[68] For at a certain point, Vicmico became known because of Don Bosco Technical Institute. Nay, Don Bosco Technical Institute became even more famous than Vicmico.

4.3. *A different work: Cebu Boys Town*

Although it finally began only in 1954, the work in Cebu had been offered to the Salesians since 1949. It was already approved, in fact, by Turin in 1951 together with works of Tarlac, Lipa, Mandaluyong and Victorias. It was an offer that was unique: it directed the Salesians into the real recipients of their founder's charisma.

The Salesian Boys Town was first an initiative of Don Ramon and Doña Maria Aboitiz of Cebu. Together with these God-fearing couple, it was the project of civic-minded and socially oriented but also religious-motivated ladies, who were mostly members of the Church organization Catholic Womens' League. The Catholic Archbishop of Cebu City, Julio Rosales, endorsed this particular initiative by the Cebuanos to Turin. For the Salesians, however, it was not to start a school but to take over a center for street children and orphans, who were actually creating an ugly social situation for the Philippines' second most important city.

The first Cebu Boys Town was a Php12,000 building, built in the compound of Cebu Cathedral. Its roofing and sidings were perched on the posts of the Church located along Legazpi Street. It was constructed with the proceeds from a Carnival in 1947 and from the donations of concerned citizens. The place, for the moment, was good enough to accommodate 30 boys and the Salesians: there was place to sleep, a public basketball court nearby for sports, and the Church itself just beside for mass. The boys ate on army trays and spent their time at the Town by cleaning the yards, scrubbing the floors and washing the dishes. It even had an extra table reserved for drop-ins but who came only for meals.[69]

But this was home for the children of the streets of Cebu City: "homeless waifs that fought, cursed, stole and starved along the city's waterfront and thoroughfares". So that when Fr. Attilio Boscariol (1915-1976) and the cleric Agustin Lopez came to Boys Town to begin their work on

[68] SAFIN Victorias: Correspondence (Paul Pfiffner, Report on Don Bosco Technical College, Victorias, 12 July 1957).
[69] *Ibid.* Cebu: The Republican Daily (23 February 1955).

15 March 1954, they received the first four boys from the Asilo de la Medalla Milagrosa,[70] as those whom they would take in later as they were picked up from the pier or were passed on to them by Cebu's concerned citizens.[71]

This particular work was supposed to be of and by the Cebuanos' charity. Like the Boys Town in America (Fr. Wegner, director of Boys' Town U.S.A. and who was in Cebu for a visit, was consulted by Fr. Ferrari regarding this new Salesian work), to sustain Boys Town, help was supposed to come from the thousands of the average people of Cebu who with their 20 centavos, 50 centavos, one or two pesos because of their kind hearts would give the boys of the Boys Town the chance to grow up into useful and better citizens of Cebu.[72] Not for less that this work was known as Cebu Boys Town. Fr. Boscariol, speaking of this work as a "unique family", declared to those who were celebrating the National Family Week in the first week of December 1954: "The Salesian Fathers are making an appeal for more cooperation for the improvement and growing up of this family, who belongs, not to the Fathers, but to you all – Cebuanos, because this too is your very own family".[73]

Thus donations for the work came from the base as well as from the upper level: a radio from a certain Mr. Ros, "galletas" from the University of Visayas, a refrigerator from a certain Don Mariano, 12 beds from Mrs. Herrera, bicycles, wheel borrows, barber's kit, sack of sugar and sack of corn from Mrs. Sidebottom.[74] The City Mayor launched "Operation One Centavo" by installing boxes in the offices so that employees could give their share.[75] The Cebu Bakeries' Association promised 75 pieces of bread daily.[76] The Board of Trustees, the committee in charge to generate funds in order to maintain Boys Town, launched a membership campaign to obtain benefactors. The Undersecretary for Commerce and Industry spoke to Cebu Rotary Club in a luncheon meeting in favour of

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[70] The "Asilo de la Milagrosa" was founded in 1934 by concerned alumnae of Colegio de la Immaculada Concepcion. In 1936, the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul took over the management of the Institution. Later, they would pass to the Salesians some of the boys of the Asilo.

[71] SAFIN Cebu: Southern Star (3 May 1955).

[72] SAFIN Cebu: [unnamed] Newspaper article (18 March 1954).

[73] *Ibid.*: Discourse of Fr. [Attiliio] Guerrino Boscariol (Cebu City, December 1954) 2.

[74] *Ibid.*: [unnamed] Newspaper article (18 March 1954).

[75] *Ibid.*: House Chronicle (25 June 1954).

[76] *Ibid.*: Correspondence (Aboitiz to Tan, Cebu, 11 June 1954).

the Town.[77] It was a fine example of lay collaboration on behalf of an initiative of the lay. However, contributions did not always come regularly and sufficiently.

The boys, who frequented Boys Town, were "fondly" called by Cebu's newspapers as "inmates". They frequented Abellana Vocational High School for their free education.[78] For the sacraments, especially that of confession, they went to the Church of Santo Niño. For their recreation, they would swim at Talisay, Marigondon, Mactan, or hike to Guadalupe, Oton or Toledo. They would even go to see movies, for free, at Liberty Cinema.

The first residents who lived at the Town were really poor and abandoned, the kind of boys that St. John Bosco would have wanted to surely help: Antonio Dangel was a 13-year old who lived near the railroad crossing and whose father was a cargador (one who loaded or unloaded cargo from boats docked in Cebu's pier); Felipe Villamor was a 15-year old orphan and was homeless; Alberto Labares was also 15 years old who worked as a cargador and whose mother was a laundrywoman; Vicente Funtebella was 11 years old whose brother and guardian was a cargador. These boys were apprehended by the police "for roaming the City without work"; they were turned over to Fr. Boscariol and to the Town.[79] Some of these boys did not stay for long because of their "nostalgia del Pier".[80]

Cebu Boys Town continued to be for street children when it transferred to its permanent home at Punta Princesa near the Antuwanga hills on 5 March 1955. Here, it now had a building complex, which could contain 200 boys who would follow a curriculum of home-keeping and handicraft work, farming and other productive vocational subjects. There had been in fact some "metamorphosis" on the boys: "once wayward, astray waifs who from ruggedness and insecurity are now very courteous, playful and possessing healthy appetites".[81] Even the Rector Major, Fr. Renato Ziggiotti witnessed this personally as he visited the work on 6 April 1955; he even wrote the confreres from Manila to thank and to encourage them for what Fr. Boscariol and the other Salesians were doing.[82]

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[77] *Ibid.*: House Chronicle (25 June 1954).
[78] *Ibid.* (29 June 1954).
[79] *Ibid*: Correspondence (Trinidad to Boscariol, Cebu City, 19 March 1954).
[80] *Ibid.*: House Chronicle (28 April 1955).
[81] *Ibid.* (2 April 1955).
[82] *Ibid.* (14 April 1955).

However, in less than six years time, Boys Town had become a technical school with an elementary and a high school, so that the boys did not need to go out anymore, as Fr. Braga informed Fr. Ziggiotti.[83] Slowly, though, that which had been closest to the "da mihi animas" of Don Bosco was ending up into the typical "collegio" and "internato". The normal boys slowly took the place of the really needy and abandoned. Cebu Boys Town, which started and which was supposed to be sustained by the Cebuanos, now became a school of and by the Salesians. It now also included a boarding house, where boys who frequented the normal school mixed with the boys of the street. And in spite of the already taxing work in Boys Town, the Salesians still adopted a parish which demanded so much from them who had to extend themselves in order to meet the demands of a school, a center for street children, a boarding house, and a parish.[84] In August 1955, a new superior, who had replaced Fr. Boscariol, would give a new sense to Cebu Boys Town.[85]

5. Foundations "fait'accompli"

It was not always according to a specific plan that the beginnings of the Salesians in the Philippines evolved; nor was it always with the immediate placet of the superiors of Turin that foundations begun. The Salesians, especially those who believed they knew better and who perhaps really knew better, entertained other offers presented to them by enthusiastic admirers of the work they did. Turin might have considered this insubordination. The Salesians perhaps thought this as providence and opportunity not to let go. Fr. Acquistapace and Fr. Braga, in fact, were reprimanded by Turin because they went ahead without even consulting Turin; the latter would defend themselves and promptly answer back.

5.1. *Don Bosco Makati: For future development*

On 27 June 1952, Fr. Braga, while still Provincial of China, had met the industrialist Mr. J. R. McMicking with whom he discussed the foun-

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[83] ASC F 163 Filippine: Corrispondenza (Braga a Ziggiotti, Tarlac, 9 febbraio 1960) 3.
[84] F 636 Cebu Punta Princesa N.S. di Lourdes (Decretum canonicae erectionis, 5 Novembris 1976).
[85] SAFIN Cebu: House Chronicle (29 August 1955).

dation of an industrial school in the area of Makati in Manila. Fr. Braga presented the idea of providing boys of the underprivileged classes who lived in the area with industrial skill, and thus be able to work in the nearby industrial plants. Such undertaking coincided with the industrialist's own, so that he was ready to give to the Salesians a six-hectare land strategically located in the industrial district that he was developing, plus the sum of Php15,000 for the first construction, if the Salesians would eventually agree and accept his plan.[86]

Fr. Braga would not be able to close this offer, since he was ending his term as provincial. Instead, his successor, Fr. Acquistapace, after having written to Fr. Ziggiotti of this offer and promised him that he would soon send the plans for approval by Turin, immediately started in December 1953 the construction of a small house for an oratory and for a temporary residence of the Salesians. He believed that this new initiative would be the germ for a grandiose work.[87] Besides, the Apostolic Nuncio and the Archbishop of Manila were now ready to give the Salesians a parish that they wanted so much, since this would help in augmenting their limited finances.

It was Fr. Fedrigotti, the Prefect General, who responded to Fr. Acquistapace's letter. He asked. Did the constructions start already? Did the donor and the Archbishop give guarantees for the finances of the initiative? Did he have authorization from the Superiors to accept the offer? Did he have personnel? Thus, for the Prefect General, Makati was still "in the air".[88]

Fr. Acquistapace, who probably felt himself still a dilettante as a provincial, had to write the Rector Major to explain the "facenda". Makati was to be treated as a future arrangement of the house of Mandaluyong. It was a work, which was not yet to be in full swing. Instead, he reminded the Superior that the Parish of San Ildefonso[89] was something that both Turin and Manila long wanted. For it was a sure source of income for the

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[86] *Ibid.* Makati: Correspondence (McMicking to Braga (Manila, 29 July 1952).

[87] ASC F 157 Cina: Corrispondenza (Acquistapace a Ziggiotti, Hong Kong, 24 dicembre 1953).

[88] ASC F 157 Cina: Corrispondenza (Fedrigotti a Acquistapace, Torino, 14 gennaio 1954): "Se non hai il personale, aspetta ad accettare!".

[89] This "Parish of Makati" was a small land with a "shed" as a Church. But in this Church, there had been for a long time a statue of Mary Help of Christians who was well venerated." Cf ASC F 157 Cina: Corrispondenza (Acquistapace a Ziggiotti, Hong Kong, 18 maggio 1955).

Salesians in the Philippines. Besides, it would be rather strange if they refused it, when other religious yearned so much to have such an offer.[90]

In the end, Fr. Acquistapace got what he wanted. The future vocational school was approved and the house was erected,[91] but again not without controversy. For Fr. Ferrari, the Provincial Delegate, managed to have the work canonically erected by the Manila Archbishop, not by Turin![92] This, obviously, did not please Turin, who had to advise Manila to tell the Cardinal in a nice way that the Salesians belonged to a religious society of a pontifical right.[93]

The Parish of San Ildefonso, which Fr. Ziggiotti would refer as Parish of Culi-Culi in reference to its location known for "la mala vita", was also accepted (but not without polemics), not only because it was to the financial advantage of the Salesians, but also for the work which the Salesians wanted to do for the young of the district which they considered as "tra le più bisognose moralmente della città".[94]

5.2. *Don Bosco Seminary-College: A Salesian's dare*

Fr. Braga, concerned that the Salesians should generate as soon as possible local vocations for the future development of their work, wanted to find a permanent place for the junior seminary. He had already eyed a terrain for sale somewhere in Tagaytay or Silang in the province of Cavite, a place where other religious had put up their retreat houses and centers of spirituality.

However, there had been a turn of events. Don Jose Yulo Sr., another industrialist who also owned a sugar refinery, had offered to Fr. Braga six hectares of land. That was, if the Salesians would agree to his condition that they take over a school within his estate. The school, according to him, had fallen into the influence of the Protestants, of which the principal was one.[95]

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[90] *Ibid.* (Acquistapace a Ziggiotti, Hong Kong, 2 febbraio 1954). Cf also *ibid.,* (Acquistapace a Ziggiotti, Hong Kong, 24 dicembre 1953).

[91] F 477 Filippine: Manila-Makati. (Decretum canonicae erectionis, Fedrigotti, Torino, 7 Juliis 1956).

[92] *Ibid.* (Decree of canonical erection, Rufino J. Santos, Manila, 15 September 1955).

[93] *Ibid.* (Osservazioni, Torino, 26 ottobre 1955). Cf also *ibid.,* Corrispondenza (Puddu a Benato, Torino, 3 novembre 1955).

[94] *Ibid.*: Makati-San Ildefonso (Conferimento della parrocchia de S. Ildefonso alla Società Salesiana). Cf also *ibid.,* (Ziggiotti, 24 gennaio 1957).

[95] F 163 Filippine: Corrispondenza (Braga a Fedrigotti, Makati, 9 agosto 1960).

Fr. Braga could not resist the offer, since it was so strategic and convenient. But above all, it was the answer to his prayer for a place for a minor seminary and a novitiate. It was, in fact, already decided to transfer the aspirantate from Negros Island to somewhere in Luzon, preferably near Manila. Indeed, most of the aspirants came from the Salesian schools located in Luzon Island; also, the parents of the boys resented their children being too far from them.

Thus, the Visitatore immediately sent Fr. Buchta, whom he had already destined to the school in Tarlac, to be director of Rizal Institute Canlubang. The latter, who had immediately begun his work, was already loved and esteemed by the teachers of the school. The Secretary of Education had even praised him in public, for having improved the school without offending anyone.[96]

But there was a greater need of the Salesian Vice-Province, which was now on the way to being erected a Province. The Filipino clerics were still sent to Hong Kong for their study of Philosophy. When they came back to the Philippines, however, they remained disqualified to teach in the Salesian schools, in as much as they did not have any degree. This already preoccupied Fr. Braga who was not at ease at the accommodations given to the Salesian clerics. The local government education officials were, in fact, just closing their eyes to the clerics' lack of qualification and allowing them to teach.[97] This also bothered Fr. Alfred Cogliandro (1911-1992), who had been appointed as Superior of the new Province. The truth was that in the Philippines, the externs and the lay teachers and personnel were practically the ones running the schools. The clerics were inferior to them, as they did not even have a college degree.[98]

Above all, this situation challenged the novice master, Fr. Jose Luis Carreño (1905-1986).[99] For after more than a year since he arrived (May 1962), he finally decided to appeal to the Rector Major to put an end to sending the newly professed Filipino Salesians to Hong Kong. In his mind, he considered this "exodus" as unjustifiable and abusive. For this, he presented to Fr. Ziggiotti all the reasons he could muster (Canon Law,

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[96] *Ibid.*

[97] *Ibid.* (Braga a Pianazzi, Makati, 9 settembre 1962).

[98] *Ibid.* (Cogliandro a Fedrigotti, Makati 31 ottobre 1963).

[99] Fr. Carreño was esteemed as "una persona amabilissimo, di buona stampa salesiana". Cf ASC F 163 Filippine: Corrispondenza (Clifford a Ziggiotti, Cebu, 4 gennaio 1962). Fr. Braga was happy that the Superiors were sending him. Cf *Ibid.* (Braga a Ziggiotti, Makati, 7 maggio 1962).

Philosophy, Salesian Constitutions, etc.) to justify his position, revealing at the same time not only his intelligence, but above all his wisdom.[100]

Fr. Carreño told Fr. Ziggiotti that he was not alone in this consideration. Members of the Provincial Council and most of the rectors shared his initiative, even if Fr. Braga, as well as the new provincial, were against it.[101] But what he proposed, that they start their own college and their own studentate of Philosophy, was realizable. There was already that "new house" in Canlubang, which could accommodate 50 novices and clerics, plus 12 professors. It was high time that they started the process of obtaining the accreditation of a College with the scholastic authorities. If they did that now, it would mean that after only four years, there could be the first Filipino Salesians really qualified to teach in the Salesian schools. Besides, staying in the Philippines, these clerics could already be actually involved in the re-Christianization of the diocese, as confided to him by the local bishop under whose jurisdiction the Salesian seminary was.[102] In the Philippines, the Filipino clerics should be formed, not elsewhere. For Fr. Carreño, this was wise and logical.

Fr. Carreño had one more thing to ask the Rector Major: to do what Fr. Bellido once did in India. The superior of the missions did not hesitate to send young clerics from Europe to the missions of India. Fr. Ziggiotti, according to him, ought to send from Europe about 20 novices to the Philippines, to join the local novices there. This mixture would be of help for both local and foreign young Salesians, as well as for the good of the new province.[103]

As Fr. Carreño wrote the Rector Major, no newly professed that of May 1963, in fact, went to Hong Kong. Instead, they were now together with the new novices in the College of Canlubang, which was already functioning as it awaited approval by the government. Fr. Cogliandro,

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[100] *Ibid.* (Carreño a Ziggiotti, Canlubang, 5 settembre 1953).

[101] *Ibid.* (Cogliandro a Fedrigotti, Makati, 3 ottobre 1963): "E' un poeta, e che cosa non è? E' uno scholar in any subject. Ma la sua poesia è una poesia sana, e per quanto ne so io che l'ho conosciuto da vicino, adesso e nel passato, è una poesia che fa del bene alle anime, una poesia salesianamente cristallina, ed una conoscenza di Don Bosco ortodossa. Se la pianta si conosce dai frutti: abbiamo un tronco ottimo, anche se – tra l'altro è rivestito di fiori poetici".

[102] *Ibid.* (Carreño a Ziggiotti, Canlubang, 5 settembre 1963).

[103] *Ibid.*: "Questi giovani imparerebbero il Tagalog e potrebbero prendere la cittadinanza di qui in 5 anni, insieme ai titoli di insegnamento; la mescola coi filippine sarebbe vantagiosa per ambedue".

who eventually converted to Fr. Carreño's initiative, confirmed to Fr. Fedrigotti the good that was actually happening in Canlubang. Fr. Carreño was doing well as novice master and rector of Don Bosco Seminary-College. They, in fact, expected about 50 clerics between novices and students of Philosophy for that coming August of 1964.[104]

Conclusion

The coming of the Salesians could be considered as rather timely, on account of the on-going Communist expulsion of religious from the Chinese Mainland. The Salesians who were being expelled and were thus losing their jobs could now go to the Philippines to give vent to their apostolic energy. The Philippines was to be the "outlet" and refuge for those who were forcibly put out of China. But it became also an alternative venue for those who wanted to get out of the China Province.

Besides, the Philippines asked for the Salesians. Fr. Braga had more than enough requests he could hold on when he first came to Manila in 1950. The ecclesiastical and the civil connived in order to bring his confreres to the Archipelago, to effect precisely the type of Salesian work that the Philippines needed most for the moment, to help its young.

The beginning of the Salesians in the Philippines was definitely "Chinese" in character. This was obviously reflected in the first personnel who came. To put it, Fr. Braga tried later to be Filipino; but his heart had always been Chinese. Or better, his heart had always remained in China, even if he tried to be Filipino too.

The first two Salesian presences were very much American. Fr. Anthony Di Falco and Fr. John Rutkowski were products of the Salesian environs of San Francisco and New York. Even the Ossorios, who were based in the U.S.A., had their industry patterned after what was American. Don Bosco School in Tarlac was also started by an American.

A good bulk of those who worked in the beginning in the Philippines was very Italian in nationality and in mentality. Their common language in the beginning was indeed Italian, which went well with those who were non-Italian. Nonetheless, this did not mean that these Sons of Don Bosco did not revise and adapt their doings to the exigencies of their

[104] *Ibid.* (Cogliandro a Fedrigotti, San Fernando, 10 luglio 1964).

work place and the recipients of their ministry. One thing they realized perhaps: the Philippines were not the missions they imagined in China.

The Salesians in the Philippines put themselves immediately in the educational apostolate. Although they almost always started with the oratory as a work, they ended up catering to schools. Fr. Braga, from the beginning, never wanted the Salesians to be inferior to the other religious who were involved in the same business of schools. Their school were very good. In fact, they gave prestige to the Salesians, especially in the technical education. But then, this was probably what the Salesians who came to the Philippines were good at.

The Salesians were known for their technical schools. But because of this, the coadjutors definitely had a crucial and important role in this technical education. There is a need to study the contribution of the Salesian coadjutors, as well as the impact of the technical education they shared in Philippine education.

THE BEGINNING OF THE SALESIAN WORK IN VIETNAM THE PATRIARCHAL STORY AND EXODUS

*John Nguyen van Ty SDB**

> *They go out, they go out, full of tears, carrying seeds for the sowing;*
> *They come back, they come back, full of song, carrying their sheaves.*
> Ps. 126, 5-6

Introduction

Up to the present day, officially the Salesians of Vietnam has had a history of over 52 years. A history that is long, as well as epic and fruitful enough to draw admiration from many, as well as attention of those who are interested in Salesian history, as we are here in these days. Certainly, this history is worth to be recorded and written down for the edification of all. ..... unluckily, because of the social and political turmoil of the country, most of the documents had been destroyed or lost, which certainly renders the writing down this history become a very challenging task. But we all hope that this work should be done, nay, must be done at all cost, in honoring the Lord of History who has reserved for it, as one of the most beautiful plan, and in honoring too the courage and sacrifices of so many Salesians who had offered the best of their life to build it up.

Anyhow today, it is my task – and also in my very limited historical competence – to present to you a short historical account of the first period of this glorious history: *The beginning of the Salesian Work in Vietnam,* of which, in using biblical expression, I would dare to give a subtitle: *The Patriarchal story and the Exodus.* The account that my presentation is dealing with covers a time-span of about 25 years, roughly from 1930 to 1955, and which comprises the following main contents:

1 – The Church of Vietnam readied herself to receive the sons of Don Bosco
2 – First heroic attempt: the work and the death of Fr. Francisque Dupont
3 – The precursor of Don Bosco: Msgr. Paul Seitz and his work
4 – Arrival of the Salesians in 1952
5 – The great Exodus, or the transplant necessary for growth.

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* Fr. John Nguyen Van Ty is a witness of the beginning of the Salesian work in Vietnam.

Due to limited time allotted to the presentation, I would try to touch just the main events that have some historical importance.

1. Vietnam had longed for Don Bosco

About Don Bosco, the young and suffering Church of Vietnam had known and to him had nurtured a great devotion many years before the coming of his sons, either. In fact, on the occasions of the beatification and the canonization of Don Bosco in the years 1929 and 1934, Don Bosco was spoken of in the circle of the diocesan clergy and religious of various orders, and in particular way, among the young seminarians of various diocesan seminaries. In fact, in order to quench the desire to know more about the new saint, the first biography of Don Bosco written in Vietnamese had been published in 1937, by Rev. Luke Ly, the Vicar General of the Diocese of Phat Diem. One year after, simple and stylish as it was, the book was reprinted by order of Msgr. Michele Picquet, Vicar Apostolic of Nha Trang; who published another edition in 1957 for the pastoral needs of the southern Vietnam. A monument in honor of Don Bosco was erected at the seminary *Trung Linh* in the year 1939.

On the other hand, as early as 1926, Msgr. Costantino Aiuti, the Apostolic Delegate for Indochina, who had his residence in Hanoi, had written a letter to Fr. Ignazio Canazei, the Salesian Provincial of China, asking him, in the name of Msgr. Ruiz de Agua, the Vicar Apostolic of Hai Phong, to have the Salesians open a school of arts and trades in his vicariate. The second letter that followed was precise and in more details: the utility of the work, favorable conditions and offerings, but also the requirements, among which having a Salesian of French nationality as superior...; to which Fr. Canazei had to decline since the Province of China at that time had only 2 French confreres who were engaged in works in Shiu Chow and in Shanghai.

In 1936, Msgr. John Bpt. Nguyen Ba Tong, the first Vietnamese Bishop consecrated in 1933 and Vicar Apostolic of Phat Diem, wrote to the Provincial Carlo Braga, asking him to send French, or at least French speaking Salesians to take care of the formation of a minor seminary, to run a parish, and to establish a professional school. Naturally, Fr. Braga by no means could cope with such a demand; anyhow he did send Fr. Joseph Kerec to Vietnam, and later he himself too, to make a trip of

exploration... In the following years, many other Salesians on their way to Kunming, would take the route via Haiphong and Hanoi, and therefore frequently created a temporary Salesian presence in Vietnam.

2. First heroic attempt: the work and the death of Père Francisque Dupont

Père Francisque Dupont would be considered as the first Salesian who had really worked and served the Salesian mission in Vietnam (before him, Fr. Giovanni Casetta, SDB served as Secretary of the Apostolic Delegate for Indochina from 1926-1927). This young French priest, when he came to Vietnam in 1940, was 32 years old. He had been a young missionary in Japan for five years, but then, because of the world war, had been mobilized 'sur place' to the French army. He then was sent to Vietnam to serve as an interpreter of the French High Command, in dealing with the Japanese occupying force. Despite of the difficult task, his heart and person was always and everywhere a Salesian missionary, who never forgot his real mission: serving the young. In the first two years 1941-1942, he had engaged himself in various pastoral works: preaching, giving conferences, directing courses of retreat, chaplain and spiritual director of various Catholic Action Groups such as Young Christian Student Movement (YCS), Scouts Association, and Girl Guides of Indochina.

It was in 1942, that he got a chance to do real Salesian work. Upon the death of its founder and director, Mr. Rene Robin (after whom the institution was named), an orphanage destined for the Franco-Vietnamese Métis children in Hanoi was proposed to be entrusted to the Salesians. The Provincial of the Salesian Province of China – Fr. Carlo Braga readily accepted the proposal, and gave permission to Fr. Dupont to take over the direction of the work, promising him other confreres to come soon in order to open a real Salesian community. Later, because of the war, only Fr. Raymond Petit (1902-1975) could arrive from Thailand to be Fr. Dupont's companion, and no other. Working with these difficult children gave the two Salesians chance to prove themselves to be true sons of Don Bosco. With great sacrifices and hard works, with the help of some lay people, they applied the Salesian educational method to change gradually the morality and spirit of this group of about 100 adolescents. Owing to the social and political conditions of the time,

they had to face mounting difficulties; and in 1944, after heavy bombings of Hanoi by the American planes, they had to move the children to Ke So, an old complex of buildings which belonged to the seminary about 50 miles south of Hanoi. A short time later, the group was split into two: a group of bigger boys returned to Hanoi with Fr. Petit in order to continue their apprentice, while the majority of boys remained at Ke So with Fr. Dupont.

By the beginning of August 1945, with the withdrawal of the Japanese occupying force, the political situation of Vietnam became chaotic. The drive for independence mingled with the hatred towards foreigners and catholics was in the air. The security of Fr. Dupont was at stake, since Ke So was in the country side too far away from center of population.

In fact, for many days, there spread a rumor that revolutionaries want to kill the missionaries at Ke So, and people tried to persuade them to find safety in Hanoi. Meanwhile, Fr. Dupont tried by all means to bring all the children to Hanoi with him. On August 10, news about the plot was imminent: they would come to assassinate the Fathers that very night. Fr. Dupont worked desperately all day to secure a passport to Hanoi for all of them, but did not succeed; the Japanese promised him the next day. That evening, on the way back from Phu Ly, the chef-lieu of the province met Fr. Cantaloube, the procurator of the seminary who was leaving for Hanoi. The latter earnestly advised him to stay over night at Phu Ly because the danger was great. And this was Fr. Dupont's answer: "You are not in charge of anyone, so you can go; but I have to stay, because of the children". That night he himself told the boys: "If the Viets come, and if they could not find me, they might revenge on you... That is the reason why I take the risk of staying. Furthermore, I was always doing good things... I always promoted good understanding between French and Vietnamese... Anyhow if something happens, I would do my best to save myself.... Everyone should die once, right? Even Fr. de Foucault had done only good things and they killed him too...".

At 9.20 p.m., a band of five, armed with light machine gun, pistol, saber, and knife broke in his room, tied him down, and forced him in pajama and without shoes out of the house towards the river. The next day, people found his body in the river; hands tied, stabbed at the loin and shot at the left temple. They buried him at the Ke So catholic cemetery.

Later, in 1947, Fr. Petit brought a group of about 30 of these children to France and confided them to the Salesian schools of Nice and Marseille. It was they that gave the first hand witnesses of Fr. Dupont's death.

3. The precursor of Don Bosco: Msgr. Paul Seitz, MEP

The history of the Salesian works in Vietnam cannot but speak about Msgr. Paul Seitz MEP, the precursor of Don Bosco in Vietnam. He first gave a helping hand to Fr. Dupont's work, then founded himself an institution in favor of the young victims of war, which later in 1952 was handed over to the Salesians when he himself was consecrated Bishop, Vicar Apostolic of Kontum. Because of him, the Salesians could restart their interrupted work in serving the young Vietnamese.

Msgr. Paul Seitz, born in 1906 at Havre, France, ordained priest in 1937, member of the Foreign Mission of Paris, was sent to and arrived in Vietnam in July 1937. He took a Vietnamese name *Nguyen Thuong Kim* (people called him affectionately *Co Kim)* and was appointed as Vicar of the Cathedral of Hanoi. To him was entrusted also the care for the Franco-Vietnamese student association and the chaplaincy of the scouts.

From 1942, this young energetic priest began to be interested with the young at risk in Hanoi. He would use the facilities belonged to the scouts to take care of this small group, especially in teaching them trades to earn their living. In 1943, the reformatory of Hanoi decided to confide to his care 80 young delinquents. Thus started the *Orphanage of St. Teresa* and their home would temporarily be the camping ground of the scouts on the *Ba Vi* Mountain, 40 km from Hanoi. With the support of the Bishop of Hanoi and helped by some MEP Fathers, Co Kim made all the efforts and sacrifices to run the work as best as he can.

In 1947, the Franco-Vietnamese war broke out again, and Ba Vi became unsafe and difficult to run (the transportation became very dangerous). Fr. Paul Seitz decided to bring the boys down to Son Tay and then back to Hanoi, by then their number already reached almost 200. At first he had to settle them at the La Salle school *Puginier*, then in 1948 moved to *Lacordaire,* the minor seminary of Hanoi (these establishments had been temporarily closed because either being damaged by the war, or impossible to gather the inmates).

Meanwhile the number of the boys had increased to 300, then 350, then 400, ranging from age 5 to 20 and over. He divided them into groups which he called families, entrusted to the direct care of seminarians and lay collaborators, while the smallest ones were entrusted to the Sisters "Lover of the Cross".

Among his many problems, the greatest was to find a definite establishment for his growing family. Somehow he managed to purchase a piece of marshy-swampy land of about 17 hectares east of Hanoi, and there he figured the project of building a Boys Town which he named "*La Cité du Christ Roi*" (The City of Christ the King). While the work was going on, by the end of 1949, the Bishop of Hanoi wanted to take back the *Lacordaire* since the seminary had to be re-opened, therefore Fr. Paul had to move once again his children to the great estate of Hoang Cao Khai, a high ranking mandarin of the imperial court in Hue.

At last, by the end of 1950 the definite home of the *Family of Little Teresa*, as it was intimately called, was ready, and the boys happily moved in, since most of the works were done by them. It looked like a real village with 12 quasi-autonomous home-families for about 30 boys each, church, workshops, classes, dispensary, administration, and electricity and water facilities... There were many other items to be completed later on, but basically the Boys Town functioned well, and it seemed to face a very bright future...

4. Arrival of the Salesians

Then, all of a sudden, on 16 June 1952, Fr. Paul Seitz, who was then Founder and Director of the Orphanage (Boys Town), Dean of the Cathedral of Hanoi, and local Superior of the Foreign Mission of Paris, was appointed Bishop of Kontum, a newly created diocese entrusted to the MEP, in the central highland of Vietnam, where majority of the population was composed of minor ethnic groups. Before such a decision, many practical arrangements should be dealt with, among which the direction of the Boys Town was the toughest.

On 13 July 1952, and the Ecclesiastical authority of Hanoi, Msgr. Joseph Trinh Nhu Khue, and the Apostolic Delegate Msgr. John Dooley, wrote to the Rector Major of the Salesians, Fr. Renato Ziggiotti, letters presenting the request that the Salesians take over the Bishop nominee's work.

Based on this request, and commissioned by the Rector Major, Fr. Carlo Braga, the Provincial Superior of China Province, sent Fr. Goffredo Roozen, provincial economer, to Hanoi for a general survey of the situation. His favorable report, together with a letter of recommendation of Msgr. Carretto from Thailand persuaded the superior in Turin to accept the offer, and to officially start Don Bosco's presence in Vietnam. The affirmative answer was delivered on 18 August.

On 14 September, Fr. Braga from Rome wrote to Fr. Antonio Giacomino and to Fr. Andrej Majcen asking them to prepare to come to Vietnam. The choice of these two pioneers was well thought of: Fr. Giacomino, of Argentinean nationality but came from Salesian Province of Brazil, Sao Paolo, had been rector of *Colegio Dom Bosco* in Macau, and Fr. Majcen of Slovenian nationality, had been missionary in China from 1935, rector of the Salesian school in Kunming, and had recently got out of the mainland. Both of them knew some French, experienced in administration, and Fr. Majcen had traveled to Kunming via Hai Phong – Ha Noi several times, therefore he knew well the way. Fr. Antonio should be rector of the new work, and Fr. Andrej his councilor and confessor.

The two pioneers were to be readied and to be present at the provincial house in Hong Kong on 30 September. They planned to arrive in Hanoi on 3 October, feast of the Little Teresa and the chosen day for the Episcopal consecration of Msgr. Paul Seitz. On 2 October, they received the recommendation and benediction of Fr. Braga, the out-going Provincial, and of Fr. Mario Acquistapace, the newly elected Provincial, who came straight from Beijing for the event.

On 3 October, their departure flight from Hong Kong was late. After much trouble, they arrived in Hanoi and to the Bishop's house when the celebration was almost over. They were received in the refectory of the Bishop's house by Msgr. Paul Seitz himself and were introduced to all the ecclesiastical and civil dignitaries present, among whom were Msgr. John Dooley, the Apostolic Delegate for Indochina, 18 bishops from all over Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos.... At a certain moment, the newly consecrated came up with champagne and invited all to a toast for the new comers, saying that he felt really sad because of having to leave his boys, but had been greatly consoled by the arrival of the Salesians who would take care of them.

That same afternoon, the two Salesians were brought to the Boys town, where, together with the new Bishop and the Bishop of Hanoi, they

were solemnly received by 450 boys and the whole administrative staff. It was in the church of the Boys Town that the ceremony of celebrating, of welcoming and of presenting was officiated, but in a prayerful atmosphere.... Concluding the night prayer, Duc Cha Kim (that was how the boys called him from then on) gave the Good Night in tears saying that: "Since five years we all had prayed incessantly for the coming of the Salesians. Now that they have come, I myself may leave in peace for the new assignment...".

It is very true indeed! Today some might think that this happening was just an administrative arrangement. Nay, it was but the result of a long and prayerful preparation. In fact, from the very early time of the *Family of Little Teresa,* the name of Don Bosco had often been mentioned to the boys as the Saint who really cares for them. Everyday, at the end of night prayer, they usually chanted two-three times a short song praying to Don Bosco as the Father of abandoned children. Msgr. Paul Seitz himself used to express publicly his wish to have the Salesians taking over his work one day, for the very lasting good of the young.

The following days were tough for all. They had to face the reality of transferring an established institution from one hand to another. There should be clear guidelines to follow... and they came up with setting down some basic principles for the transfer. The two pioneers too needed time to study the Vietnamese language. Finally, they all agreed that the Salesians should have at least three to six months to learn the Vietnamese language and customs; that the present staff (mostly MEP personnel) should continue to work at least for one year and to be replaced but gradually, that in the meantime, the Salesians should send in more personnel; that the Salesians should respect the primitive spirit of the institution and should introduce the Salesian spirit and the Preventive System of education but gradually. The priority was to find ways and means to make the workshop function well, since the need of training trades to the elder boys was pressing.

After having received reports from the two pioneers, by the beginning of December 1952, Fr. Mario Acquistapace, the Provincial of China Province unto which the Salesian work in Vietnam was juridically belonged to, decided to come in person to Hanoi. He had important meetings with the Bishop of Hanoi and Msgr. Paul Seitz to settle many juridical issues. In this occasion, he also promised to send in more confreres, which was very pressing indeed. Thus came on 20 March 1953, Fr. Lorenz Bohnen, a Dutch and good professor of French lan-

guage who would be in charge of the studies of the boys, on 4 July, Fr. Generoso Bogo, a Brazilian to be 'catechist', and Fr. Pierre Cuisset, a French to be economer, and in August, Br. Andrea Bragion, an Italian lay brother veteran missionary in China, to be in charge of the workshop.

The transfer had been done quite peacefully, though at times, some tension and misunderstanding. By September 1953, on the opening of the new school year, the running of the *City of Christ the King* was securely in the hand of the Salesians. Most of the old personnel went to join Msgr. Seitz in Kontum, so did the lay collaborators. The Salesians, now six in number, with Fr. Andrej Majcen as rector, were assisted by some diocesan seminarians, who came for first hand experiences on the Salesian life and spirit. The *Teresians* were transforming gradually into *Bosconians...*; and it seemed to everyone that a bright future was opening up ...

5. The great exodus or the transplant of the Salesian work

While the Salesians were engaging in their work, the war (the so called French Indochina War) was escalating throughout the country. By the first months of 1954, the military and political conditions became more and more precarious. There were more recruitments of fighting men on both sides; there were talks and speculations about the communists taking over Hanoi, and so forth... The social climate was boiling, so too was the spirit of the children of the Boys Town, especially among the older boys. So much so that when Br. Bragion, who had spent most his energy and sacrifice to put up the metal and mechanical workshop, wanted to start the training courses, he could not: the older boys just boycotted it. The real motive was that most of them preferred to join the army or to go down south... And despite all his efforts, he did not have enough boys to open his courses in training.

During the Holy Week of April 1954, the Provincial from Hong Kong came for an urgent meeting; and here were the decisions taken: (1) Making first steps to find a suitable place in South Vietnam in case... (2) Select and send the best boys, especially those of good hope for vocation, to the care of Msgr. Seitz in Kontum. (3) The Salesians who had communist experience in China should be the first ones to be pulled out if the situation should get worse.

In fact, some weeks later, on 7 May 1954, the French army was defeated at Dien Bien Phu, the communists taking over Hanoi and the whole North Vietnam seemed so imminent... Three months that followed, everyone was thrown in disarray... An international conference was being convened in Geneva to find a solution for Vietnam, meanwhile rumors of every kind sprung up like mushrooms. Fr. Cuisset and Fr. Majcen made a trip to Saigon in order to look for places and possibilities, and came back disillusioned with the poor result: in fact the Bishop of Saigon, Msgr. Cassaigne denied the Salesian permission to settle eventually their children in Saigon... The division of Vietnam was just an open secret, and the refugees began teaming in Saigon in quantity... Meanwhile, the Sisters *Lover of the Cross* withdrew their members from the work, and prepared themselves to go south, taking with them a small group of the youngest boys. So were also the seminarians of Bui Chu diocese. Br. Bragion too asked to go back to Hong Kong because he had no boys to work with....

On 19 September 1954 in Geneva, an agreement was signed by all the interested parties to divide Vietnam into two: the north to the communists, and the south to the nationalists. At that moment, there came a telegram from Hong Kong with the order to hand the children back to the Bishop and return to Hong Kong. It was like a thunderbolt from a blue sky, as Fr. Majcen recalled later. Upon learning about the matter, the Bishop of Hanoi, in agreement with the Apostolic Delegate, in the name of the Holy Father obliged the Salesians to secure a place for the children in the south, before any of their withdrawal. When Hong Kong was informed about this reaction, the Provincial decided on the evacuation of the children. Nevertheless, it insisted on the immediate withdrawal of Fr. Andrej Majcen.

In the meantime, on an invitation of Msgr. Seitz, Fr. Majcen arranged a quick trip to Ban Me Thuat in order to secure a place for the children, which turned out to be a cattle ranch annexed to a coffee plantation. All the complex was located right in the midst of a tropical forest, distant 20 miles from the chef-lieu of Ban Me Thuat and belonged to Bao Dai, the last emperor of Vietnam. It was just a temporary shelter, but good enough to handle about 200 children for the time being ... Going back to Hanoi, Fr. Giacomino and Fr. Majcen handed over the work to Fr. Cuisset, Fr. Bohnen and Fr. Generoso and flew back to Hong Kong.

Now, the Boys Town "Christ the King" had to prepare with all ur-

gency to its south-bound trip. With much regret and with the help of bigger boys, the Salesians decided to dismantle and to pack up all the properties as much as they could: all the movables of course, but also the immovables such as roofs, windows, doors... even the iron skeleton of the workshop.... They had to rebuild their home somewhere in the south, and certainly these goods would serve. Then in extremely difficult conditions, they had to look for means of transport to carry these items by land and sea, via Hai Phong, Nha Trang to Ban Me Thuot, and eventually to Saigon. On 23 August 1954, the main body of the Orphanage: 350 boys with the Salesians, were air-lifted by ten military planes from Gia Lam airport directly to Ban Me Thuat, where Msgr. Seitz was waiting to take them to the temporary settlement.

They immediately installed themselves in the new abode which was actually a huge cow stable (actually sharing with circa 100 cows)... with no bed, no table... nothing, but a makeshift wooden floor to sleep on. They arranged themselves as best as they could and tried to organize their own living. It was a real challenge to feed this large group in the midst of the jungle, and it was still more challenging to boot up the spirit of these children in organizing their daily life... taking the study for example: how to make them study when there were no classrooms, no desks, no blackboard, no books...? The Salesians were conscious that this kind of Robinson's life must be ended as soon as possible, and some drastic decision and solution should be urgently made.

By the end of October, Father Provincial, Mario Acquistapace from Hong Kong, via Saigon, came to visit the camp. The trip was so perilous that he actually broke his leg by falling down from his scooter on a slippery road. He met Msgr. Seitz and the Salesians, listened to them and promptly made the decisions:

- The boys over 17 should go to Duc Cha Kim to find jobs and earn their own living.
- By personal reason, Fr. Bohnen should leave Vietnam for Haiti, and more confreres should urgently be sent to Vietnam.
- Fr. Cuisset should step up the task of looking for lands in Saigon to settle the group definitively.

Finally, the 'promised land' was found: it was a terrain of circa 5 hectares at Thu Duc, 10 miles north of Saigon. On the eve of TET - lunar new year (February 1955) - the new family of 260 boys and three Salesians (Br. Giuseppe Borri, an old, humble Italian lay brother was added), after a whole day of traveling along 250 miles through the forest, arrived at

their new home: six large military tents were erected on a desert land of white sand. Meanwhile, the materials from Hanoi had also arrived, they would build definitely their lodging with their own hand. Anyhow, Don Bosco's presence had been successfully transplanted and a new phase of life serving the young has begun.

Some reflections as conclusion

On preparing the paper for this Seminar, by reading the various memoirs, that I have in hand, of the witnesses of this so tumultuous a period: Fr. Andrej Majcen in the first place, Mr. Nguyen Duc Tran, and the old boys of Fr. Dupont, I myself personally, as one of the witnesses to this history, since I have lived inside it most of my life time, feel very much enriched by it, both in memory and in spirit. Looking back at this period of more or less 30 years, I am able to discern, in a certain way, the Divine Providence's plan for the Salesian Mission in Vietnam (and for my personal vocation too). The evangelical principle: "unless the seed of wheat would die away, it can bear no good and abundant fruits" is valid, and in this case is most applicable than ever.

The Church of Vietnam in general, and the Salesians of Vietnam in particular, are building up day after day their glorious long history of service to the poor and young people in a land that had imbued so much sweat and even blood of their predecessors. The dream of Don Bosco about the two chalices of sweat and blood came into reality in this land (as in the case of the mother Province of China). We look upon them, not only to find good examples and lesson of experiences, but rather to increase in faith and thankful heart. We would thank God for his wonderful divine plan, we would thank the Congregation at world and provincial level, through the person of the Superiors in their own time, instruments of this plan; we would thank most of all the protagonists (living or dead) of this very history for their labor in laying good and valid foundation for the service. I myself would pay to all of them my personal gratitude.... May God bless them all and give them the eternal repose.

"*Historia docet*", and we all are indebted to it. I hope soon there would be someone who will be generous enough to dare consecrate time and effort to write down a complete history of the province of

Vietnam, together with that of China and other Salesian provinces of the so-called *Far East*. Such a precious work would certainly make great contribution to foster the Salesian mission in these countries and help to form younger generation of Salesians in good apostolic spirit. And all of this means for the greater glory of God and the salvation of many, many more souls: *"Da Mihi Animas, Coetera Tolle"*.*

* Documents consulted: *L'Opera Salesiana nel Vietnam.* Breve storia scritta da Don Andrea Majcen SDB e compilata da Don Mario Rassiga SDB. Hong Kong: A.T.S. 1984; *Révérend Père Francique Dupont Missionaire Salesièn, Martyrisé et assassiné au Ke So (Viet Nam) le 10 aout 1945 au l'âge de 37 ans.* Dossiers documented by Mrs. Marie France and Mr. André Bordg. January 2002; *Coâ Nhi Vieän Teâreâxa, Tieàn thaân cuûa Gia Ñình Teâreâxa Hieän nay.* Recollected memory of Mr. Nguyen Duc Tran. Ho Chi Minh City, May 2004; 50 *Naêm Don Bosco Vieät Nam 1952-2002.* A Short History of 50 year Presence of Don Bosco in Viet Nam. Dossiers documented. Ho Chi Minh City, 2002; Archivio Centrale – Pisana, Roma. Documents concerning affairs of accepting the Orphanage of St. Teresa in 1952 and the canonical erection of the first Salesian house in Hanoi.

A CONCISE HISTORY OF THE SALESIAN KOREAN MISSION

*Michael Chang SDB**

1. Don Bosco arrived before the Salesians

Don Bosco was a man who dreamed dreams. His dreams became reality and are still becoming reality. A lot of people think that he had a dream that is connected with the Korean province. The dream concerns the evangelization of Northeast Asia. I will now attempt to say a few words about how that dream became a reality in Korea.

If we look at the historical records that we have in our possession, the first Salesian confrere to set foot on Korean soil was the "Don Bosco of the East", the Eastern Interpretation of Don Bosco's Preventive System, the Venerable, Fr. Vincenzo Cimatti. In 1934, he went to Manchuria to give a concert. At the same time he visited Korea, giving a concert in four cities. After touring Korea, he went back to Japan and wrote an article for the Salesian Bulletin entitled "Don Bosco of Korea." It appeared in the February 3, 1939 edition of the Italian "Bolletino Salesiano".

> "I went to Korea to give a concert. As I was passing through that land, I saw that the faithful know Don Bosco. The articles that were written about Don Bosco in Japanese were printed in the catholic magazine «KyeongHyang Japji». Therefore, the Koreans know about Don Bosco and some have even taken the baptismal name of Bosco. Bishop Larribeau of Seoul, who is a member of the French Foreign Mission Society, told me this. St. John Bosco has gone before us into this land".

After that Fr. Cimatti himself as Provincial began to form missionaries in Japan to send to Korea. The first Salesians to enter Korea were the fruits of these endeavors.

2. Invitation

The entrance of the Salesians in Korea has great similarity to the way the Church entered Korea. The Confucian scholars of the closing years of the Lee Dynasty discovered the Church while studying the "new

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* Fr. Michael Chang SDB is presently rector of the Salesian High School of Kwangju, Korea.

learning" called western learning. They carne to know God, felt a fascination for the values of the Gospel and came to believe. From their ranks, they sent Lee Seung Hun to China to receive baptism and to ask for missionaries from the Chinese Church. After that, the scholars made study of Matteo Ricci's "De Deo Verax Disputatio" and other catholic books and thus continued their research in the faith.

After a number of years, the Chinese Church was able to send missionaries and from that time on the Church in Korea began in earnest. In Church history, it is difficult to find another example of the Church starting on its own initiative like the Korean Church did; that is, without the help of missionaries but by the people of the land itself studying the values of the Gospel and then spontaneously asking for missionaries. The Salesians also entered Korea in a similar way.

According to our sources, the first time the Salesians were asked to come to Korea was in 1908. At that time, the Ordinary of Korea Bishop Gustav Charles Marie Mutel (1854-1933) was trying to open a teachers' training school to obtain qualified staff for the catholic schools.

Bishop Mutel went around Europe trying to enlist those religious institutes engaged in education and missionary activity to help open up a teachers' training school in Korea. At this time, he met Fr. De Bagneux, the Provincial of the southern French Province of the Salesians. He gave him a brief report on the state of the Korean Church and asked that some Salesians be sent to help with the project. But at that time the French Salesians were short of personnel and could not possibly send anyone to Korea.

However, he did send the brief report to Fr. Rua who was then Rector Major. Unfortunately there was no response from Fr. Rua either. Inspite of that, the desires of Bishop Mutel to have the Salesians were taken up by his successors. In 1935, Bishop Adrien Joseph Larribeau M.E.P. (1883-1974) asked that they print the life of St. John Bosco and an introduction to the Salesian Society in the "KyeongHyang Japji" on the occasion of Don Bosco's beatification. The life of Don Bosco that was printed in this magazine gave great impetus to vocations for the first Salesians when they finally did arrive and began to accept aspirants. This was also a record giving testimony to the truth of Fr. Cimatti's words: "Don Bosco has gone to Korea before the Salesians".

In May 1936, Bishop Larribeau constructed a new parish church in Torimdong, which was part of a newly developing industrial section of Seoul called Yeong Deung Po. He gave the church the title of St. John

Bosco. He then invited the Salesians to come and take up the pastoral work connected with this zone. But again the Society was unable to respond. After the expulsion of all foreign missionaries by the Japanese, Bishop Larribeau's successor, Bishop Paul Ki Nam Ro (1902-1984), also asked for the Salesians to come; but his desires were not answered in the affirmative at that time.

When the Second World War finished, Korea became an independent nation. But soon the Korean War began. Even during the war, again in 1951, Bishop Ro repeatedly asked for Salesians through the Apostolic Delegate residing in Japan, Bishop Massimiliano Furstenberg. But the time for the Salesians to enter Korea still had not arrived.

3. The beginnings of Salesian work in Kwangju, Korea

In 1953, the Bishop of the Diocese of Kwangju, (Bishop Harold W. Henry S.S.C. 1909-1976) in the southwest of South Korea, made a concrete proposal to the Salesians of Japan. He asked that they send confreres and build a school. At that time, Bishop Henry had received an offer of U.S.$100,000 from a foundation established to set up a school in memory of an American chaplain who was killed during the Korean War (Fr. Emil Joseph Kapaun 1916-1951). In 1954, the Provincial of Japan, Fr. Clodovico Tassinari (1912) visited the Diocese of Kwangju to look over the situation. At that time, Bishop Henry again beseeched him to send Salesians to open a school. He returned to Japan and after hesitating a bit decided to send confreres from Japan to Kwangju. On 12 August 1954, Fr. Archimede Martelli (1916-1984) was the first Salesian missionary to enter Korea on a permanent basis. He arrived in Kwangju on the directive of Fr. Renato Ziggiotti, then Rector Major.

At that time Korea had just finished a three-year war (1950-1953). Korea was devastated, poor and wretched. There were a lot of orphans and it was a period in which the financial, political and social aspects of Korean society were in great confusion. It was a period of great hardship. Upon arriving in Korea Fr. Martelli writes the following:

> "Everywhere you can see the spoils of war and a lot of poor people. There is no order in society. There are a lot of beggars and especially many young people on the streets. They don't even have the basic necessities of life. It is like it was in Japan after the Second World War. I have discovered a very surprising thing. There is a big church named after St. John Bosco. It seats

> over 1,000 people. I have also met a lot of faithful whose baptismal name is Bosco. A lot of people know about Don Bosco. There is even an orphanage named 'John Bosco's House' and at the parish there is a society called 'The Don Bosco Society'".

Fr. Martelli, just like Fr. Cimatti, was able to feel that Don Bosco preceded the Salesians to Korea. At that time and under those circumstances one can imagine how difficult it was to build a school. But there was a government official named John Bosco and with his help the difficulties in construction could be overcome. The diocese helped financially in part so that in 1956, Salesian Middle School and in turn, in 1959, Salesian High School came into being.

4. Growth

In 1958, the Salesians were again invited by the Archdiocese of Seoul to take over the pastoral administration of the above-mentioned parish of Torimdong, named after St. John Bosco. At that time the surrounding area was a place where very poor people gathered to live. There were many young people who could not afford to go to school due to poverty. Therefore, the Salesians ran a school and an oratory from the parish and put all their strength into charity work, education and vocational recruitment. After these facilities were established, many Salesians and Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, many priests of the Seoul Archdiocese and other dioceses got their training and formation here. (The present Provincial of Korea is a product of this Oratory). As vocations to the Salesian life increased in 1963, the province built the formation house of Taerimdong and from that time on the province seriously started to give the young Salesians a formation adapted to Korea.

In 1968, in order to give young people a technical education, the province started Don Bosco Vocational Training Center. It was the fruit of financial aid from Misereor, the Korean government and money collected by the confreres. Many difficulties had to be overcome and now with the financial help from the government it is doing very good work among poor and abandoned boys in difficulty.

After that, the Korean Province continued to grow. Together with the government and the local Church, the confreres were working enthusiastically in schools, parishes, social work for youth, correctional institutes for young people, youth training centers, vocational-technical schools,

media education, vocational recruitment, the labor movement and migrant workers. In 1998, the Province established a technical school in Yanji, China and through this technical education, it endeavors to spread the Gospel and Gospel values. The Province had also sent missionaries to Mongolia and the Sudan.

Presently, the Korean Province has 55 priests, 17 perpetually professed brothers, 35 temporary professed, four novices and 31 aspirants attending the first two years of major seminary. We receive numerous invitations from different dioceses and the government to do work for youth and are doing our best to respond. During our 50th anniversary celebrations, Archbishop Nicholas Jeong JinSeok of Seoul mentioned in his homily that he expects a contribution of the Salesians toward the evangelization of North Korea. The unification of the Korean peninsula is the desire of our people and our Province is preparing itself to do its part in fulfilling that desire.

5. Characteristics that appear in the history of the Korean Province

Above, we have briefly considered the start and development of the Korean Province. When we look at the history of the Salesians in Korea we can find the following characteristics.

First, The Korean Province and the Korean Church both have the same kind of beginning. We can see the hand of Divine Providence in these beginnings. In that Province, we came to realize that Don Bosco was with us in realizing his dream. The history of the Korean Province was the discovery that Don Bosco was present in Korea before his Salesians in order to realize his vision for the Province.

Secondly, as the Salesians grew in Korea, they were able to establish very good relations with many people. Government officials, diocesan priests, lay collaborators, the Salesian Sisters and other congregations of men and women all wished us well and showed great concern for the education of youth. The first Salesians in Korea were great animators of people.

Thirdly, the direction of our Province was focused on "the preferential choice of poor youth". The early missionaries handed down to us this core of our spirit and still today it is operating as the most important criterion in deciding our pastoral directions.

APPENDIX

Casa Generalizia

Rome 4 December 2004

Dear SDB, FMA and members of the Salesian Family:

On behalf of members of the General Council presently in plenary session, I wish to greet you and to welcome all of you in this Seminar on Salesian History in the East Asia – Oceania region of the Salesian Society.

I am very glad that all SDB provinces (except Oceania which I visited lately) of your Asian region are represented in this Seminar, which I consider important for the on-going reflection on the life and apostolate of the Salesian Society today.

I am also happy that the other members of the Salesian Family (the CSM by the Venerable Vincenzo Cimatti and Fr. Antonio Cavoli [1937], the SIHM by Bishop Gaetano Pasotti [1937], the DQM by Fr. Carlo della Torre [1954], and the SAL by St. Luigi Versiglia [1936]) are participating and sharing their own respective Salesian histories regarding their beginnings. Definitely, their contribution will reveal how rich our Salesian history is, and how extensive it has become.

Even the participation of the DBV reveal how Don Bosco's charism, in the consecrated Christian faithful living in the world, has been imbibed and continues to make history among the lay in your promising Region.

That your Salesian History Seminar coincides with the China Province's preparation for its centenary is a further reminder to us all that we cannot neglect to know our roots and our past. The Salesian apostolate in China, so very fruitful and promising, could not but "spill over" to the other countries around her.

We cannot become indifferent to our history; otherwise, we risk losing a part of our being Salesians. The Seminar you are inaugurating should help in going back to our roots; it should challenge us to a serious reflection on the present and the future of the Salesian presence in East Asia-Oceania. For when you think of the beginnings of the Salesian presence in East Asia-Oceania, you delineate what could help to make your present apostolate among the young more actual and more relevant, and thus assuring your continuity and future.

In my last circular letter (#387 October-December 2004 "I Give thanks to God each time I remember you" [Phil. 1:3]), I presented the Western European Region of the Salesian Society, endeavouring "to make you better acquainted with the history of this Region". Your seminar is one way of making me, as well as all the Salesians and members of the Salesian Family, acquainted with your regional history which cannot be considered inferior to the rest of our Salesian History. Definitely, you will also discover something "spectacular" in the development of the Congregation in your Region. And that which is "spectacular" will reveal to you the presence of the Mystery and the Lord of History in the journey of the Salesian Family in your part of the globe.

Your seminar should help us not to get bogged down with the past. Instead, with the knowledge of the past, the Salesians should be enlivened and provoked to offer to the present young new responses as Don Bosco did, inventing and creating in order to meet their needs. Essentially, it will not be the structures that you will recall, but "Salesian educators defined by a charism" and who became pioneers in the establishment of the Salesian tradition in East Asia and Oceania.

I shall pray for the success of your Seminar, imploring the Immaculate Virgin Help of Christians, in whose novena we find ourselves, to guide and lead you to the discovery of her Son's constant intervention in your history. In a few days time, we shall remember the birth of the Oratory, the primordial work of Don Bosco. May your Seminar lead you to affirm and to constantly remember that our Salesian Family had made history and will continue to make history in as much as we remain faithful to our Founder. Would that our Salesian History teach us this!

Fr. Pascual Chavez V. SDB (Rector Major)

Istituto Figlie di Maria Ausiliatrice

Rome, 3 December 2004

To the Participants of the Seminar ACSSA Hong Kong

Dear Participants,

At the start of the Seminar on "the beginning of the Salesian Presences in East Asia – Oceania" I wish you a fruitful encounter also on behalf of our Mother General, Mother Antonia Colombo and the entire General Council of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians.

The Seminar takes place at the beginning of the centenary celebrations of the Salesian (SDB) presence in China. I congratulate you for this happy initiative which allows you to reflect together on the history of the Salesian Family in East Asia-Oceania.

The Daughters of Mary Help of Christians ventured out into this part of the world in 1922 after the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Institute on the insistent request of the Salesian Confreres who recognized the need of their presence and work among young girls and women. The power of the Holy Spirit opened the way for the Salesian charism to become a gift for the young people of Asia and Oceania and since then it has experienced abundant fruit.

Re-reading history brings into evidence the incarnation of God's Project through the decisions and actions of persons and of communities who responded to the ever-changing needs of young people. Creativity is, in fact, one of the salesian characteristics

May the experience of the seminar become a renewed reason for continuing the journey in every country of Asia and Oceania thus deepening inculturation and inter-religious dialogue. May it make our educative mission ever more effective.

For us, Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, the challenge of the education of women in the diverse contexts where we work remains an open question. As members of the Salesian Family we are responsible for fostering the growth of the charism, enriching it through profound dialogue with diverse cultures and sharing it in the Church with other religious congregations and with the laity. The Salesian Family has much to

receive from Asia and Oceania. I believe that the reflections of the seminar will help our discernment today regarding the future of christian and religious life in these regions of great hope and profound expectations in which we are called to live the "da mihi animas" with great passion for God and for humanity, especially for young people.

May Mary Help of Christians, Mother of all humanity and of all ages, bless you and sustain your passionate search for signs for the building of God's Kingdom.

Sr. Yvonne Reungoat FMA

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE SALESIAN PRESENCE IN EAST ASIA – OCEANIA
Hong Kong, 4 December 2004

Dear brothers, sisters, friends and members of ACSSA:

From far away Spain, I wish to be present in the inauguration of your Seminar with the title "The Beginning of the Salesian Presences in East Asia – Oceania", in order to extend to you my welcome and my greetings.

Your Seminar constitutes a new and important advancement in the work of research on the history of the Salesian Family, as traced out from the International Congress celebrated in Rome last November 2000. It is the third of a series of international and continental meetings programmed for the years 2003-2004. The first seminar, European, was celebrated in Vienna, and the second, Latin American, took place in Argentina. Today, you are inaugurating in Hong Kong the third, which is Asian.

The choice of Hong Kong as seat of the Seminar wishes to be the contribution of ACSSA to the centennial celebrations of the Salesian presence in China. It is ACSSA's way of joining you in thanking God for the fruitful apostolate realized in China during the past hundred years, a work confirmed by the Church when it declared officially the sanctity of the Salesian martyrs, Versiglia and Caravario.

The content of the previous two seminars has been oriented to prepare the coming International Congress, whose theme is "Salesian Education from 1880-1922. Instances and Actuations in Diverse Contexts", and which hopefully will be held in early 2006.

The first round of seminars had aimed to verify the sources of documents and the situation of the archives. This was followed by the study of the orientations which were sent from the centre of our Congregations to the numerous foundations in the various continents. The answers of inculturation by the pioneers of the Salesian presences existing today, have put to light the essential and the permanent of our charism, as well as the flexible and the ductile. These flourishing presences witness to the generous giving of the Salesians to the children and to the young in their distinct poverties.

This could also be the wonderful aim of this Seminar which you inaugurate today and which we consider important. The Salesian pres-

ences in East Asia – Oceania are indeed very near in time and very varied in their contexts. But they are also full of hope, as they continue to count on the help of the Lord and the protection of Mary.

In the name of the all the members of ACSSA, I send this greetings of welcome and congratulations to you who come from countries so far. I express to you my most sincere appreciation for the valuable contribution of a greater knowledge of our Salesian history, which undoubtedly will be the fruit of your Seminar.

Seville (Spain) 4 December 2004.

Sr. Maria Fe Nuñez Muñoz FMA
President - ACSSA

PARTICIPANTS

1. Br. Benedict BAEK SDB (Korea)
2. Sr. Paola BATTAGLIOLA FMA (Timor)
3. Fr. Jean-Paul BEAUVE SDB (Taiwan)
4. Fr. Gregorio BICOMONG SDB (Philippines)
5. Sr. Estrella CASTALONE FMA (Philippines)
6. Fr. Michael CHANG SDB (Korea)
7. Fr. Peter CHOI YONG SUP SDB (Taiwan)
8. Fr. Gaetano COMPRI SDB (Japan)
9. Fr. Enrico DANIELI SDB (Thailand)
10. Sr. Maria DOTHI TUYET NHUNG FMA (Vietnam)
11. Sr. Maria Elena ESTACIO FMA (Cambodia)
12. Fr. Lanfranco FEDRIGOTTI SDB (Hong Kong)
13. Fr. Michele FERRERO SDB (Taiwan)
14. Sr. Marisa GAMBATO FMA (Japan)
15. Fr. Savio HON SDB (Hong Kong)
16. Fr. Nestor IMPELIDO SDB (Philippines)
17. Fr. Thomas KEMMLER SDB (Taiwan)
18. Sr. Ma. Domenica LEE CHONG JA FMA (Korea)
19. Sr. Rosetta LEE MEI YIN FMA (Macau)
20. Sr. Mae Angela LEE YONG FMA (Korea)
21. Sr. M. Goretti LAM FMA (Taiwan)
22. Fr. Domingos LEONG SDB (Hong Kong)
23. Sr. Grazia LOPARCO FMA (Italy)
24. Sr. Elena MIRAVALLE FMA (Hong Kong)
25. Fr. Francesco MOTTO SDB (Italy)
26. Fr. Francis NGUYEN MINH THIEU SDB (Vietnam)
27. Fr. John NGUYEN VAN TY SDB (Vietnam)
28. Sr. Maliwan PARAMATHAWIROTE SIHM (Thailand)
29. Ms. Agnes PAULINO (Philippines)
30. Sr. Panarat PHENGPINIT SIHM (Thailand)
31. Sr. Teresa RATCHANEE SIMMALEE DQM (Thailand)
32. Sr. Teresia Furuki RYOKO CSM (Japan)
33. Sr. Anna SAKSRI NGAMWONG DQM (Thailand)
34. Sr. Ana Rosa SIVORI FMA (Thailand)
35. Br. Hilario SEO SDB (Korea)
36. Fr. Carlo SOCOL SDB (Hong Kong)

37. Sr. Teresa THIPPAWAN PARKSUWAN FMA (Thailand)
38. Br. Francis TRAN HOANG LONG SDB (Vietnam)
39. Sr. Anna TRAN THI SANG FMA (Vietnam)
40. Sr. Cecilia TSE FMA (Hong Kong)
41. Fr. Roneldo VILBAR SDB (Philippines)
42. Fr. Joachim YE MAUNG SDB (Myanmar)
43. Sr. Maria Mukai YUMIKO CSM (Japan)

"The Beginning of the Salesian Presences in East Asia – Oceania"
- A History Seminar jointly organized by ACSSA & China's DB100 Celebrations -

Venue: *Harbour View International House*
4 Harbour Road, Wanchai, Hong Kong
Date: *04-06 December, 2004*

Part I – China related topics (open to local auditors)

1st Day (Saturday 4 December)

08:00	Breakfast
09:00-09:15	Opening speech Salesian Provincial & FMA Provincial
09:15-09:25	Presentation of works: Fr. Motto
09:25-09:55	"The Political Situation in China 1920-1930 and Its Effects on the Salesians" (Domingos Leong SDB)
10:00-10:35	"Salesian Missionary Activity While Blessed Philip Rinaldi (1921-1931) Was Rector Major with Particular Reference to Eastern Asia" (Francesco Motto SDB)
10:40-11:00	Break
11:00-11:35	"The Arrival of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians in the Far East" (Grazia Loparco FMA)
11:40-12:30	Q&A, Floor
13:00	Lunch
15:00-15:35	"The Birth of the China Province and the Expansion of Salesian Work in East Asia (1926-1927)" (Carlo Socol SDB)
15:40-16:15	"The Beginning and Development of the Salesian Work in Japan" (Gaetano Compri SDB)
16:15-16:35	Break
16:35-17:10	"The Initium of the Salesian Presence in Thailand" (Enrico Danieli SDB)
17:10-18:00	Q&A, Floor
18:30-19:15	Holy Mass (Fr. Savio Hon SDB)
19:30	Dinner

2nd Day (Sunday 5 December)

08:00	Breakfast
09:00-09:10	Summary of proceedings & presentation 2nd day: Fr. Motto

09:10-09:45	"The First Salesian Presence in Timor (1927-1929)" (Amador Anjos SDB)
09:50-10:25	"The Beginning of the Salesian Work in Vietnam" (John Ty SDB)
10:30-10:50	Break
10:50-11:22	"Salesians in the Philippines (1949-1963): Historical Notes" (Nestor Impelido SDB)
11:25-12:00	"A Concise History of the Salesian Korean Mission" (Michael Chang SDB)
12:00-12:45	Q&A, Floor
13:00	Lunch
15:00-15:15	"The FMA Mission in China" (Elena Miravalle FMA)
15:15-16:30	"The History of the FMA Mission Inserted in the History of Salvation (1929-1952)" (Marissa Gambato FMA)
16:30-16:45	"The Beginning of the FMA Work in Thailand. The First Twenty Years (1931-1952)" (Ana Rosa Sivori FMA)
16:45-17:00	"The FMA in the Philippines" (Estrella Castalone FMA)
17:00-17:20	Break
17:20-18:00	Q&A, Floor
18:30-19:15	Holy Mass – Bishop Joseph Zen SDB
19:30	Dinner / Informal meeting with Bishop Zen

Part II – For ACSSA Members & interested participants

3rd Day (Monday 6 December)

08:00	Breakfast
09:00-09:10	Summary of proceedings: Fr. Motto
09:15-09:50	"Historical Notes on the Founding of the Caritas Sisters of Miyazaki" (Maria Mukai Yumiko CSM)
09:55-10:15	"The Identity of the Sisters Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Thailand" (Maliwan Paramathawirote SIHM)
10:20-10:40	"History of the Origins of the Institute of the Daughters of the Queenship of Mary" (Anna Saksri Ngamwong DQM)
10:40-11:00	Break
11:00-11:20	"The Don Bosco Volunteers in the Philippines" (Agnes B. Paulino)
11:20-11:40	"The Salesian Congregation in Myanmar" (Joachim Ye Maung SDB)

12:00-12:45	Q&A, Floor
13:00	Lunch
15:00-17:00	Methodological and programmatic issues
17:30	Departure for Holy Spirit Seminary: visit (18:00-18:30)
18:30	Holy Mass
19:30	Dinner at Jumbo Seafood Restaurant

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2. Domingos LEONG SDB: "*The Political Situation In China In 1920-1930 And Its Effects on Salesians*"
3. Carlo SOCOL SDB: "*The Birth Of The China Province And The Expansion Of Salesian Work In East Asia (1926-1927)*"
4. Gaetano COMPRI SDB: "*The Beginning And The Development Of The Salesian Work In Japan*"
5. Enrico DANIELI SDB: "*The Initium Of The Salesian Presence In Thailand*"
6. Amador ANJOS SDB: "*The First Salesian Presence In Timor (1927-1929)*"
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8. John NGUYEN VAN TY SDB: "*The Beginning Of The Salesian Work In Vietnam. The Patriarchal Story And The Exodus*"
9. Michael CHANG SDB: "*A Concise History Of The Salesian Korean Mission*"

PART TWO – THE SALESIAN FAMILY (FMA, CSM, SIHM, DQM, DBV) (Volume Two)

1. Grazia LOPARCO FMA: "*The Arrival Of The Daughters Of Mary Help Of Christians In The Far East*"
2. Elena MIRAVALLE FMA: "*The Mission Of The Daughters Of Mary Help Of Christians In China*"
3. Marisa GAMBATO FMA: "*The History Of The Mission of the Daughters Of Mary Help Of Christians Inserted In the History of Salvation (1929-1952)*"
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Of Mary Help Of Christians In Thailand. The First Twenty Years (1931-1952)"
5. Estrella CASTALONE FMA: "*The Daughters Of Mary Help Of Christians In The Philippines*"
6. Maria MUKAI YUMIKO CSM: "*Brief Historical Notes On The Foundation Of The Sisters Of Charity Of Miyazaki*"
7. Maliwan PARAMATHAWIROTE SIHM: "*The Identity Of The Sisters Servants Of The Immaculate Heart Of Mary In Thailand*"
8. Anna Saksri NGAMWONG DQM: "*History Of The Origins Of The Institute Of The Daughters Of The Queenship Of Mary*"
9. Agnes PAULINO: "*The Don Bosco Volunteers In The Philippines*"

APPENDIX

RECTOR MAJOR
FMA VICAR GENERAL
ACSSA PRESIDENT
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BY-LAWS OF THE ASSOCIAZIONE CULTORI DI STORIA SALESIANA*

Art. 1.
The scope of the Associazione dei Cultori di Storia Salesiana (ACSSA) is to promote studies on salesian history, favour research, updates and collaboration among its members, animate the Salesian Family in the historiographic profile, spread the knowledge of Don Bosco and the works which he originated, all these in dialogue with analogous civil and religious institutions.

Art. 2.
The ACSSA achieves its scope through:

a. a quadriennial convention
b. meetings of members by geographical area
c. contributions of studies
d. organization of conferences, courses and series of lectures
e. promotion and collection of gathering of sources and of written memoirs, photos, radio-television...
f. publication of a *Bulletin of Information*
g. other initiatives suited to the by-laws of the association.

Art. 3.
The ACSSA has been erected by the Rector Major of the Salesians in 9 October 1996. It is located in Rome, in the Salesian General House, in via della Pisana, 1111.

Art. 4.
The bond of the ACSSA with the Salesian Family is guaranteed by the Rector Major through his delegate.

Art. 5.
The planning and the implementation of initiatives (cf. art. 2) goes in agreement with the "Salesian Historical Institute".

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* Associazione Cultori di Storia Salesiana can be translated as Association of Enthusiasts of Salesian History. In this case, an enthusiast can be an expert, connoisseur or student of Salesian History.

Art. 6.
1. The members of ACSSA are those who, qualified in the historical sciences or working at various levels of research, study and salesian interest, request membership and are accepted by the Presidency.
2. The members are required to collaborate with the Presidency, at least by sending information and salesian documentation related to the zone of membership.

Art. 7.
1. The ACSSA is governed by the Presidency, composed of the President, the Secretary-Treasurer, four members and the director of the Salesian Historical Institute.
2. Except this last, all the members of the Presidency are elected by the assembly of members in the occasion of the quadriennial convention (cf. art. 2) without specifying their roles, which are designated by election in the internal of the same Presidency, and approved by the Rector Major.
3. The Presidency has the task of coordinating the activities of the Association, admitting members, resolving cases of doubt regarding the implementation of the Regulation, examining the economic balance, promoting and/or patronizing local initiatives.
4. When elected, the members of the Presidency remain in office four years from election; they can be re-elected.

Art. 8.
1. The economic management of the ACSSA, entrusted to the Treasurer subject to the responsibility of the President, is conducted in understanding with the delegate of the Rector Major.
2. The annual due is fixed in dollars...

Art. 9.
The annual *Bulletin of Information*, sent by the Secretary to the members who are up-to-date with the payment, will insure the necessary link with the Presidency and among the members of ACSSA.

Art. 10.
The present by-laws have been approved *ad experimentum* for a five-year period by the Rector Major of the Salesians.

Rome, 9 October 1996.

ASSOCIAZIONE CULTORI STORIA SALESIANA
VARIA

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2. Nestor Impelido (ed.), *The Beginnings Of The Salesian Presence In East Asia. Acts Of The Seminar On Salesian History, Hong Kong, 4-6 December 2004. Part One: The Salesians of Don Bosco*. Hong Kong 2006.

3. Nestor Impelido (ed.), *The Beginnings Of The Salesian Presence In East Asia. Acts Of The Seminar On Salesian History, Hong Kong, 4-6 December 2004. Part Two: The Salesian Family (FMA, CSM, SIHM, DQM, DBV)*. Hong Kong 2006.

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- Vol. II: *Esperienze particolari in Europa, Africa, Asia*. Istituto Storico Salesiano, Studi 17, 470 p.
- Vol. III: *Esperienze particolari in America Latina*. Istituto Storico Salesiano, Studi 18, 557 p.

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